

INTERVIEWS WITH EDWIDGE DANTICAT AND JOHN HUME

# In These Times

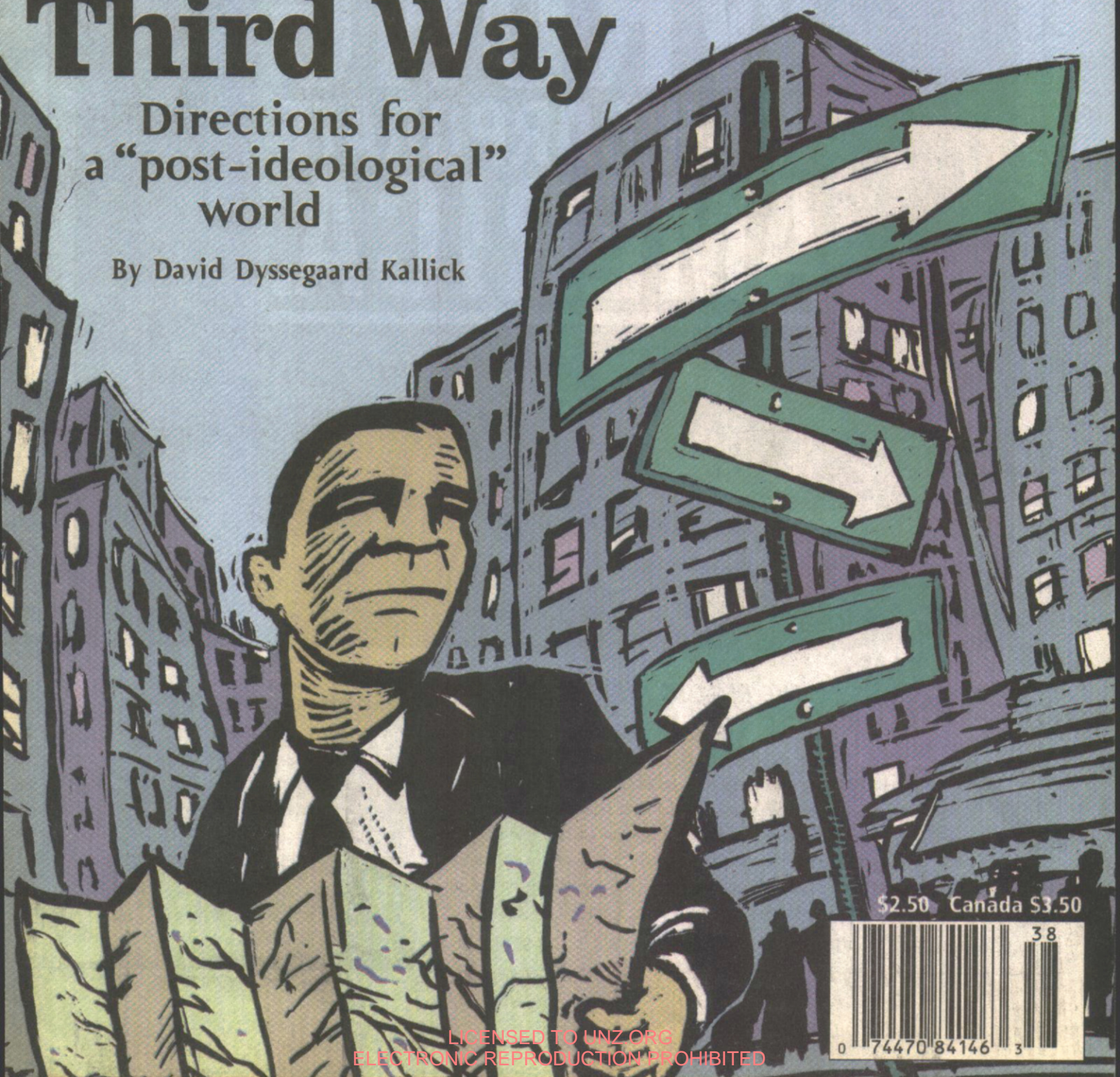
INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

November 29, 1998

## Finding the Third Way

Directions for  
a "post-ideological"  
world

By David Dyssegaard Kallick



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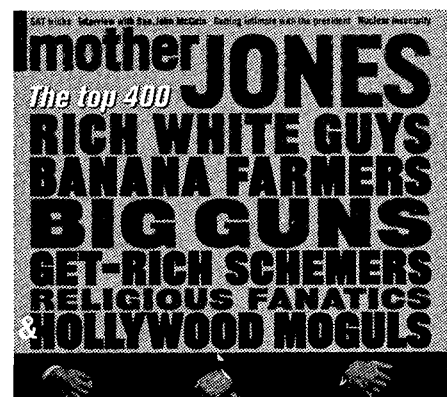


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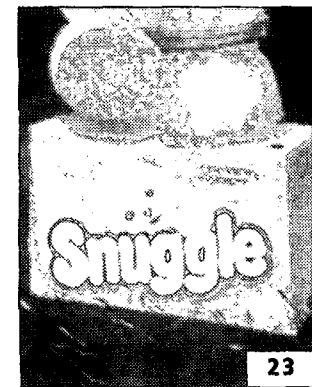
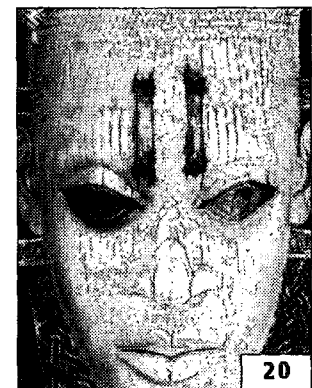
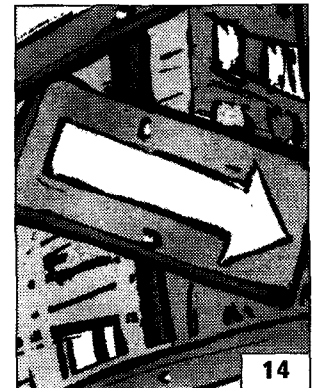
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Edwidge Danticat talks about *The Farming of Bones*.

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By Scott McLemee

Boy howdy!



Cover illustration by Brian Ralph

## Subject to Debate

I was sorry to see that Chris Lehmann uses my *Nation* column about *Titanic* as his text in arguing against the "cultural left" in favor of the "class left" ("It's Class Stupid," October 18). I don't accept these categories—gender and racial equality are not "cultural" issues, in my view—but I do try hard to write about current events from a class, as well as race and gender, perspective. As for *Titanic*, isn't it interesting that so many teen-age girls and women went to see it four times? I thought that was worth writing about, and certainly as interesting a way to approach the movie as yet another piece about what a mean boss James Cameron is, or how yet another big-budget movie has bad politics. They pretty much all have bad politics! How often can you preach that sermon to the choir? I never called the movie "populist," though—a word that for me will always be associated with racism, anti-Semitism, nationalism, anti-intellectualism and, of course, the "rigid family discipline" Chris Lehmann finds so unworthy of left-wing attention. I say, if you're going to revive the social movements of the past, why not go for socialism?

**Katha Pollitt**  
*The Nation*  
New York

**Chris Lehmann responds:** *I am sorry to see that Katha Pollitt accuses me of arguing that "rigid family discipline" is "unworthy of left-wing attention." I made no such claim; rather, I was characterizing the neoconservative portrayal of the attitudes of the liberal*

*"New Class." I am also sorry to see her caricaturing the political tradition of populism in such misleading terms: While a handful of Populist leaders did descend into bigoted demagoguery, many more joined the ranks of the Socialist Party. Her protests to the contrary notwithstanding, these sorts of broad-brush misattributions of reactionary attitudes—and distrust of popular democratic traditions—are commonplace in discussions with many adherents of the cultural left. Though my piece was critical, I hoped by taking some measure of the odd turns of debate over class and culture, it could help us conquer the impulse to pitch interlocutors at one end or another of the culture wars. That it would be greeted as a crypto-conservative apologia suggests we still have a long way to go.*

## Animal Planet

Thank you for Erik Marcus' review of Peter Singer's *Ethics into Action: Henry Spira and the Animal Rights Movement* ("An Activist's Life," November 1). Henry Spira agreed with Albert Schweitzer that "compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to humankind."

Henry continued to support justice for working people, women and minorities, even after his focus turned to animal liberation. Henry understood that justice can't be bound by species, any more than by race or gender. "Speciesism," bias on the basis of species, is as unjustified as racism, sexism, homophobia or any other prejudice. Real work for justice must include all beings.

Henry taught me that to be a leftist means to live a life focused squarely on championing the oppressed. None are more oppressed in our society than animals, including the more than 8 billion who live short and miserable lives on factory farms, and die violent and bloody deaths in slaughterhouses.

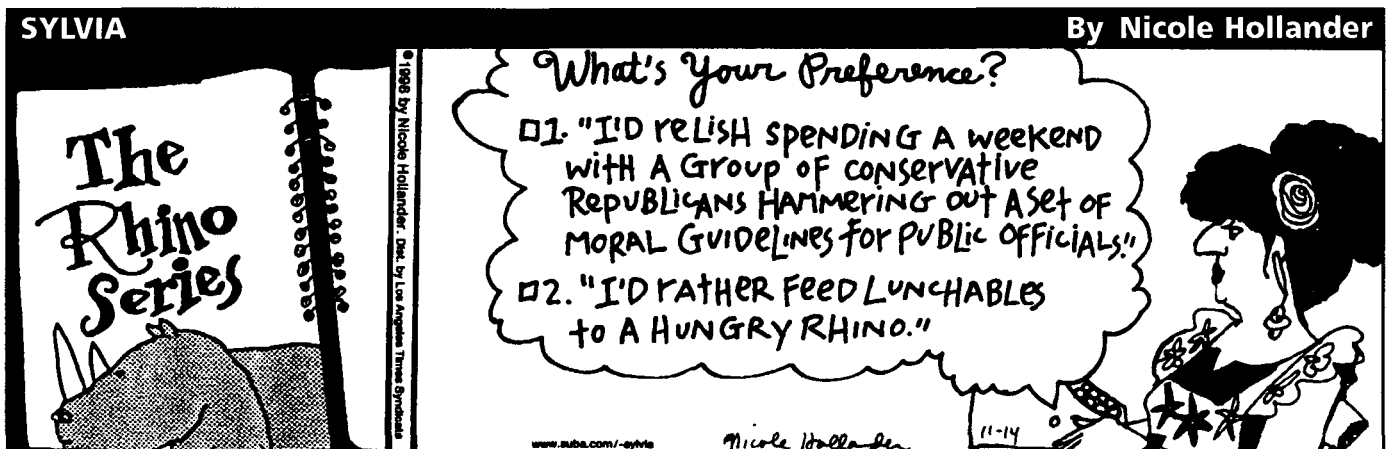
**Bruce Friedrich**  
Norfolk, Va.

## His Private is Public

I must take exception to some aspects of the "A Funny Thing Happened" editorial (November 1), wherein the scandal surrounding Bill Clinton was dismissed as "private behavior." True, who besides Clinton and those with whom he is intimately involved should really care about his sexual activity? If that's all there was to the scandal, that should be the end of it.

But "thoughtful discussion of public policy" should include allegations of perjury as well as lying to the public by high government officials. Indeed, the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the CIA cover-up of *contra* drug running, and similar governmental falsehoods are part of the "degenerative process" to which the editorial referred. Large sectors of the population now seem to be moving from outrage to cynically passive acceptance of governmental lying. Obviously, Clinton lying about his personal contretemps is not the equivalent of the CIA's extensive track record of duplicity. But there is a very slippery slope here.

**Jay D. Jurie**  
Sanford, Fla.



# Global Snake Oil

If one is to believe the mainstream press—and we don't—the people of the world can breathe a sigh of relief. Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has announced an austerity plan that he hopes will ensure that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United States certify Brazil as a worthy recipient of \$30 billion in aid to inoculate itself from what President Clinton calls the “global financial contagion.”

On October 28, safely after the national elections, Cardoso proposed \$7.3 billion in budget cuts (about 10 percent of the nation's budget), which will hamper efforts to address Brazil's social deficit; \$7 billion in social security tax increases, which will hurt the middle and working classes; and \$6 billion in additional revenues from taxes on financial transactions, which will affect anybody who writes checks or transfers money. Cardoso's goal is to reduce the nation's fiscal deficit, which currently stands at 7 percent of the gross domestic product, and get as close as possible to the 3 percent surplus the IMF has asked for.

But for most of Brazil's 160 million people, the “cure” will be as bad as the disease. About 108 million Brazilians live in poverty, including 39 million in utter squalor without proper sanitation, clean water or decent housing. The country's population includes 12 million *abandonados*, children without parents or homes. Brazil also boasts one of the starkest disparities of wealth in the world. The richest 10 percent of the population control 54 percent of the nation's wealth; the poorest 10 percent, less than 1 percent. In light of these statistics, cutting social spending to meet IMF guidelines seems less a financial cure than a draconian bloodletting.

The chief beneficiaries of these procedures will be U.S. bankers, who hold much of Brazil's estimated \$140 billion of short-term debt. For their part, the U.S. banks have been unwilling to provide Brazil some breathing room by converting their short-term loans to long-term ones—perhaps because they are betting the IMF-U.S. rescue plan will step in and absorb their risk.

Of course, in this interconnected economic world, everyone benefits when the world's ninth largest economy is saved from a disastrous depression. Should Brazil's economy go bottom up, other economies in Latin America would surely follow. Argentina already is feeling the pain of the depressed Brazilian auto industry.

The question is: Can anything be done without trampling on the already downtrodden? In this issue, David Moberg suggests some real-world remedies for the world economic crisis, ways for governments to

regulate their economies so that they serve the interests of all their citizens.

For example, Brazil, rather than cut its deficit, could follow the example of the United States during the Great Depression and invest in education, public health, environmental protection or sustainable energy—investments that provide returns for years and years. Other solutions present themselves. Cardoso could look for ways to cut the budget in areas other than social spending. The country's \$14 billion military budget comes immediately to mind. A wealth tax applied to a portion of the assets of the richest 10 percent of Brazil's population would be another way to raise revenues. But those solutions require a fundamental rethinking of economic priorities. And we can't expect that to come from former investment banker and current Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, nor, for that matter, from the nation's editorial opin-

**The chief beneficiaries of this cure will be U.S. bankers, who hold much of Brazil's estimated \$140 billion of short-term debt.**

ion shapers. A *New York Times* story on Cardoso's austerity plan quoted Rubin, an IMF spokesman, a U.S. banker (a former colleague of Rubin's at Goldman Sachs), a Brazilian banker, a Brazilian industrialist and three Cardoso government officials. Just one representative of the government's opposition was quoted, and then only to illustrate the point that “it is by no means sure, however, fiscal discipline can be successfully imposed.”

A similar editorial slant can be seen in the coverage of Brazil's recent state elections, which were portrayed as a contest between the sane, sensible Cardoso and his tax-and-spend opponents on the left, who, one is led to believe, don't quite understand global economic imperatives. In those elections, the opposition did well, winning 9 of 13 governorships. Those victories are significant, offering hope by providing a potential defense for Brazil's dispossessed against a U.S. “rescue.” The United States seems intent on doing in Brazil what it did in Mexico in 1995 with its \$20 billion bailout package that kept Mexico solvent but plunged many Mexicans into poverty.

In October, World Bank President James Wolfensohn described the plight of the world's poor as “a human crisis from which the developed world will not be able to insulate itself.” It remains to be seen whether those noble sentiments are merely another way of saying, “Let them eat rhetoric.” J.B.



# Mounties Cracked Down on Protesters to Please Suharto

By Clive Thompson  
TORONTO

Canada is not a place where you'd expect the government to quash free speech to please a foreign dictator. But Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien is currently up to his ears in controversy over exactly that. Secret documents recently have come to light suggesting that Chrétien personally ordered a crackdown on student protesters—so that visiting Indonesian President Suharto wouldn't be "embarrassed" by public dissent.

Suharto visited Vancouver on November 25, 1997, as a delegate to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. APEC is a classic example of modern geopolitics: It's a forum where Canada and the United States get together and make business deals with some of the worst human rights abusers in the Asia-Pacific corridor.

In an uncharacteristically fierce show of force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) liberally used pepper spray to break up more than 2,000 student protesters at the summit, which was held at the University of British Columbia (UBC). They arrested almost 50 students, many of whom were strip-searched. In one case, law student Craig Jones was arrested merely for putting up signs on his dorm lawn declaring "Democracy," "Free Speech" and "Human Rights." The police actions were so over-the-top that, after enduring weeks of gruesome headlines and news reports, the RCMP launched its own embarrassing inquiry into the officers' actions.

And that's when the surprises began.

The inquiry has revealed documents suggesting that the crackdown was orchestrated directly by the prime minister's office. In particular, they show

that Chrétien's staff was obsessed with quashing even basic dissent for fear that Suharto wouldn't show up. In the months leading up to the APEC summit, the prime minister's office bargained with the Indonesian president, promising to implement increasingly draconian limits on protests in a frantic effort to entice the dictator to attend. The prime minister's office "expressed concerns about the security perimeter at UBC, not so much from a security point of view but to avoid embarrassment to APEC leaders," reads one e-mail memo dated September 12, 1997, from Robert Vanderloo, a Canadian foreign-affairs official in charge of organizing the summit. Another government document warns that Suharto demanded that he not even see a protest while in Canada.

Police documents, too, point directly to the prime minister. "PM wants tents

strangely vindicated, since the documents show what they suspected all along. "It's pure appeasement," says Jaggi Singh, a 27-year-old former linguistics student who helped organize the protests. "They threw free speech out the window and brought Suharto in." Singh was arrested the day before the protest, and forced to sign a document promising he wouldn't go on campus the day of the summit.

Government officials say the inquiry, expected to last several weeks or months, will vindicate them. "There's been nothing that is inappropriate," says Peter Donolo, Chrétien's director of communications. On the contrary, he argues that "leaked memos" and "incomplete excerpts of documents" have been taken out of context and blown out of proportion by Canadian media. "It's scandal envy," he jokes, suggesting that Canadian media, casting their eyes south at the Lewinsky fiasco, are desperate for their own miasma.

Though public opinion isn't quite sympathetic to the protesting students, it is swinging against the prime minister. It doesn't help that some of those arrested were extremely clean-cut

types. Jones, for example, is hardly a radical; currently working at a corporate law firm, he describes himself as a "nonviolent civil libertarian." "It's all pretty insane," he marvels.

Most importantly, though, this incident sheds some interesting political light on the oft-debated issue of how democracies ought to deal with dictators. Political leaders on the right and the left have argued that Western countries have to trade with dictatorships to steer them toward democracy.

In this case, precisely the reverse happened. To play host to a dictatorship, Canada had to behave like a dictatorship too. ■

A regular contributor to This Magazine, Clive Thompson is a writer in New York.



The Suharto Welcoming Committee

out," reads one police memo, in reference to the crackdown on a tent city set up on campus. Another discusses the presence of anti-APEC banners, arguing that "Common sense tells us we do not want banners nor would the PM's office."

Protesters are incensed—though also

# There's Something About Marriott

By David Bacon  
SAN FRANCISCO

**A**t the end of September, the Marriott Corporation handed out more than \$1.5 million in wage increases to housekeepers, room servers and the rest of the 1,000 unionized employees at its San Francisco flagship hotel. Workers who hadn't had raises for two years suddenly went home with back paychecks for as much as \$2,000.

But it wasn't an act of generosity. The hotel was desperately seeking to cut its liabilities in the face of a massive labor board complaint over a union-busting strategy that has blown up in its face. For embattled union workers inside the hotel, it felt like victory.

Over the past year, more than five dozen Marriott workers have been spending long hours giving affidavits in the San Francisco office of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). On September 1, union activists carried that fight back into the hotel itself, forcing its human relations director, Donna Shepherd, to retreat as they took over the employee cafeteria.

Housekeepers, bellmen, waiters and kitchen workers all turned in their chairs to watch, as a stocky, dark-haired man in his thirties stood up. "My name is Ramon Guevara," he announced, "and I work in the room service department. We're basically here today because you deserve to know the truth about the unfair labor practices being committed by Marriott management." For the next 10 minutes, Guevara gave a stinging critique explaining why, 18 years after the Marriott chain signed a neutrality agreement and nine years after its San Francisco flagship hotel opened, workers still have no union contract.

The downtown Marriott, nicknamed "the jukebox," is so big that its 1,000 workers have four separate, staggered lunch times. Repeated throughout the day, the lunch teach-ins were intended to do more than keep workers up to date. "It was a very bold step," room server Amy Cavanaugh says, "We were afraid at the start, but part of the pur-

pose was to get rid of the fear. And people loved it."

The battle in the lunchroom is evidence of a much larger struggle inside the hotel, as workers assert their right to



San Francisco's HERE Local 2 is getting angry.

openly support the union. Management hostility has been so pervasive, the union says, that it has filed more than 100 allegations of illegal conduct against Marriott with the NLRB.

The charges outline an intense war in the workplace intended to remove the representation rights of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE) Local 2, rights it took the union 15 years to win. Marriott first proposed building the hotel in 1980. To win over opponents of development, it was forced to reach an historic agreement with the city: The company pledged it would hire community residents to work in the hotel, and that it would not oppose efforts by Local 2 to organize its employees. It was a major concession from a large corporation with an anti-union reputation.

In 1989, the hotel finally welcomed its first guests, but despite the agreement, Marriott spent the next six years fighting legal battles with Local 2. Finally, under a court mandate, the hotel agreed not to campaign further against the union, and to recognize it if an independent arbitrator found a majority of its employees had

signed union cards. However, despite claims of neutrality, the hotel held 22 mandatory employee meetings where the company clearly expressed its desire to remain union-free. Arbitrator John Kagel eventually found the hotel in violation of the neutrality agreement in the spring of 1996.

In August 1996, union workers inside the Marriott felt strong enough to hand out union cards. In eight days, they rolled up a majority. Kagel certified the union's right to bargain, and negotiations started in late November. The first half of the contract was nailed down in the following months, but negotiations soured by spring 1997. "From day one, there was a real question whether the company would live with the city-wide standard the union has negotiated with other hotels," Local 2 organizing director Kevin O'Connor says. "Our minimum and their maximum were not in the same ballpark."

One thorny issue was the hotel's refusal to guarantee workers two consecutive days off. Human relations director Shepherd says that's no longer a problem, but the hotel still won't agree to the union's proposed work rules.

As bargaining grew more difficult, workers began signing petitions and forming delegations to talk to management. Then, last fall, employees in jobs not covered by bargaining—engineers, front desk staff, clerical workers and others—began wearing anti-union buttons. The buttons quickly spread into the bargaining unit as the hotel held department meetings to talk about the bargaining delays.

Housekeeper Josephine Cruz Rivera remembers a big meeting her department held on November 14, 1997, which Shepherd attended. "She told us that we would get a raise if the union went away," Rivera says. "I told her that the union wasn't going away, and she shouldn't say that. She wanted us to fight among ourselves."

"I told people we couldn't raise wages for them until the contract was resolved," Shepherd says of the meeting. "If someone wants to assume that it's resolved by the union going away, they can do it. We expect to get a contract."

But on that same day, a mysterious group appeared—Associates for a United Marriott. ("Associates" is the term the company uses for employees.) Petitions

*Continued on page 6*

# Appall-o-Meter

The In These Times Index of Indecencies

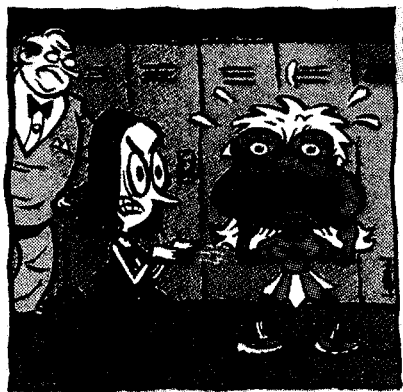
By David Futrelle

## Spell Checked

Fifteen-year-old Wiccan Jamie Schoonover recently discovered that the practice of witchcraft is no more popular with officials of Baltimore's Southwestern High School today than it was with the town fathers of Salem, Mass., all those years ago. After a dispute with another student, Reuters reports, Schoonover was suspended from school for "casting a spell on a student," as her suspension slip put it. "Baltimore schools officials later pronounced the whole thing a misunderstanding and said Schoonover's suspension order should have cited her for making an alleged verbal threat," Reuters notes. "Schoonover, whose father is a 45-year-old transsexual named Colleen Harper, stands out at school because she wears all-black clothing and is a devotee of gloomy 'Goth' rock music, school officials said." At least they didn't burn her at the stake.

## Dangerous Minds

In yet another ill-starred school suspension case, a fifth-grader at a South Carolina school was suspended for 10 days after bringing a knife—a butter knife—to school. Citing the school's "zero tolerance"



policy, Horrell Hill Elementary School officials defended their suspension of butter-knife-wielding youngster Christopher Wood as

necessary to maintain proper discipline in the lunchroom. According to school spokesman Greg Plagens, the school is "just not going to tolerate any child bringing a knife or gun or any kind of weapon for any reason." Woods' mother, who packed the knife with her son's lunch, says she did it so that her son, with sensitive teeth, could cut up and eat a banana.

## Potty Politics

When millions of Americans rushed to download their very own copies of the Starr Report, some tech boosters celebrated the event as the coming of age of the Web as a news source. Well, it's time to celebrate yet another medium: toilet paper. *U.S. News and World Report* recently discovered the report published on toilet paper for sale at Washington's Political Americana for just \$6.95.

*Continued from page 5*

began circulating in the hotel to decertify Local 2. Shepherd denies any connection to the group, which would be a violation of federal labor law. But Paul Webb, a room server at the hotel since its opening, thinks otherwise. He saw engineers not covered by Local 2 carrying petitions. One of them had a confidential company list of people employed in each department. "Every time we had department meetings," he says, "Shepherd would mention signing the petition."

Key to the decertification effort, the union charges, were two 4 percent raises Marriott gave its non-bargaining unit employees in January 1997 and January 1998. Nonunion workers also received a cut in medical costs. "The message was, if you make the union go away, you can get these benefits too," Guevara says.

Marriott's recent raises for its union employees give them the same deal it gave its nonunion workers. While Shepherd denies any connection to the union's campaign or the NLRB charges, Local 2 President Mike Casey says management moved "only in response to the

impending NLRB prosecution and to pressure its workers."

The decertification petition was filed with the NLRB on December 30, 1997, but it remains in legal limbo until union charges of illegalities are resolved. Meanwhile, pro-union workers inside the hotel recently have stepped up pressure through cafeteria teach-ins, wearing buttons and the boisterous picket lines that have surrounded the hotel entrances two and three times a week for the past few months. "We've stopped the decertification campaign dead in its tracks," Guevara says. "There's no way they're going to get the union out of here."

The Marriott fight is a key national test of strength between the hotel union and the corporation, which has the goal of owning 2,000 hotels by 2000. Although some Marriott hotels have unions, those were already in place when the corporation bought them. The "jukebox" campaign marks the first time a union may win a contract for a hotel directly under the company's management.

For the union, the campaign tests the value of neutrality agreements, a key

tactic in the plans of Local 2 to organize San Francisco's six remaining nonunion Class A hotels—the biggest and most expensive ones in the city. In Las Vegas, the largest HERE local in the country uses such agreements frequently to organize the huge casinos. Across the bay in Oakland, HERE Local 2850 wants to require such agreements as a condition for building new hotels downtown.

The Marriott campaign is the first attempt to enforce neutrality while a company wages an all-out campaign against it, and success will provide a precedent. "Neutrality isn't without its problems," explains Local 2 president Mike Casey. "But it gets us to bargaining faster, even when an employer is committed to fighting the union."

At the San Francisco Marriott, it has taken 18 years. "The hotel has to accept that they have to settle the contract," Guevara says. "We had eight years without the union, and we didn't like it. We're going to get a contract. That's final." ■

David Bacon is a writer and photographer based in Berkeley, Calif.



# Montana Judge Strikes Down Spending Limits

By James B. Goodno

**A**dvocates for campaign finance reform suffered a major setback in October when a U.S. District Court judge in Helena, Mont., overturned Initiative 125, a precedent-setting state law that banned direct corporate contributions to ballot-issue campaigns.

Approved by voters in 1996, I-125 was meant to restore confidence in the initiative process. I-125's supporters contend that corporate spending corrupted the process and that restricting money was justified under the U.S. Constitution. Although I-125 allowed corporations to continue to donate money through political action committees, businesses—led by the Montana Chamber of Commerce and Montana Mining Association—challenged the law's constitutionality in federal court.

The Montana initiative was the first attempt to work within the limits set by the Supreme Court to control spending on ballot issues. The Supreme Court ruled that states must recognize corporate free speech rights and required them to demonstrate that corporate spending has an overwhelming, detrimental impact on the political process before they can restrict it.

In Montana, Judge Charles C. Lovell ruled that I-125 was constitutional as written, unconstitutional as applied, saying the situation in Montana did not meet the Supreme Court's "overwhelming impact" standard. "The court finds there are many factors involved other than money," Lovell said in his oral decision, adding that the law "silenced" corporate voices and had a "chilling effect on corporate officers and directors."

"All Montana was doing was following the 1990 Supreme Court decision that corporations must use political action committees rather than corporate funds for campaigns," responds Brenda Wright of the National Voting Rights Institute in Boston. "I don't see how you can have a stronger record of

how corporate spending distorts the initiative process than in Montana."

The defense points to numerous studies that show how corporate spending in Montana distorted the initiative process before I-125 was passed. "We found that when corporations wanted to defeat initiatives—if they were willing to spend the money—they could defeat initiatives," says Chris Newbold, executive director of Montana Public Interest Research Group.

In recent years, corporate-funded campaigns in Montana defeated initiatives meant to impose stricter environmental regulations on the mining industry, increase the minimum wage and mandate recycling of beverage containers. In 1990, tobacco companies spent \$1.62 million to defeat a proposed 25-cent tax on a pack of cigarettes. According to Newbold, 98 percent of the money came from out of state. The tobacco companies spent as much to defeat the initiative as was spent by all of Montana's candidates for state office that year. In the end, the initiative fell by a 57 to 43 percent margin.

Before I-125, Newbold says corporate spending was turning many citizens' groups away from a process that was originally created as a populist response to the domination of corporate lobbying in the legislature. "If you don't have a level playing field, the debate is just not there," he says.

There is a silver lining of sorts to the loss in court. In this year's election, Newbold says, there has been more direct contact with voters and better media coverage of the issues, most notably on an initiative seeking to prohibit the use of cyanide in new silver and gold mines. In part, this is a result of the mining industry's failure to mobilize its political action committees against the initiative, instead focusing its efforts on the court challenge to I-125.

I-125's supporters are planning to appeal the decision—and the stakes are high. If Lovell's standard of "overwhelming impact" is upheld, it will be difficult for other states to prove undue corporate influence under existing case law. "If the appeal fails, we'll have to take a completely different approach," says Jonathan Motle, an author of the initiative and an attorney for the case. "I don't know what that approach is." ■

James B. Goodno is editor of *The Urban Ecologist*.

After shoveling arms to the Indonesian military for decades, Congress passed a bill on October 23 banning the use of U.S. weapons in East Timor. The bill also supports holding a referendum for independence on the island. With more than 200,000 killed since the 1975 invasion—often by American weapons—the bill is too little, too late.



AFP/MAYA VIDON

# Pinochet, "Miracle" Worker

By Larry Birns

**W**hatever the eventual outcome of the case, Britain's detention of Chile's best-known senior citizen on charges of genocide certainly has created a mass media confusion. Twenty-five years after he overthrew President Salvador Allende, and eight years after he formally yielded power to a democratically elected government, Gen. Augusto Pinochet is big news.



Clearly, much of the U.S. press hasn't yet discerned the true nature of today's Chile, or, for that matter, yesterday's.

Here, the nation's editorial writers have become shockingly indifferent to Pinochet's brutal regime. Many of them have gone so far as to posit that his lustrous "economic" miracle and objectionable human rights policies cancel each other out.

This media muddle is no surprise given the fractured picture that the 82-year-old former dictator usually prompts. Pinochet long has served as a metaphor for both the left and the right—a perfect figure for caricaturing the other side's ideological conjuring. On the right, for instance, Washington's Cato Institute lauds the dictator's 17-year rule for cutting the binds of Chile's hobbled economy, freeing its marketplace to thrive (and pushing at least 25 percent of the nation's poorest into further misery). The libertarian Washington lobby so admires Pinochet's naked neoliberal reforms that it has hired his former labor minister, Jose Piñera, to head its project on privatizing Social Security. On the other side, those who call for Pinochet to stand trial and praise the Spanish judge for ordering his arrest for murdering Spanish citizens, see him as a Judas who used his position of trust to condemn to death thousands of Chile's citizens and its constitutional system—even if he made the trains run on time.

Unfortunately, the economic "miracle" has clouded his undeniably

heinous record. For the media, the economy has always been a wedge issue: Allende destroyed it, they say, Pinochet made it spin. His true notoriety has been a matter of shocking indifference for editorial writers. *The Wall Street Journal*, which, unsurprisingly, is one the most persistent defenders of Pinochet, had a simple response to Pinochet's capture: "Arrest Fidel." They attributed the detention of their main man to "a fringe of angry old communists and starry-eyed leftists sitting out in Spain."

But even at the more moderate *Washington Post*, the issue was clear: Pinochet is "not your typical strongman. The *Post* writes, "he did remove a democratically elected government and see to the killing of thousands," he also "saw to the rescue of his country from chaos and to its controlled evolution into a prosperous democracy."

Though acknowledging the dictator's excesses in *pro forma* disclaimers, the mainstream media fail to recognize that Pinochet's "miracle" was based entirely on his rule by decree, a suspended constitution, a shuttered legislature and the absence of any checks and balances. These writers apparently have suspended belief in the rules of the democratic game, which mandate that the end doesn't justify the means and that elections, not gun barrels, should determine victors. Is Pinochet's development model really the one that these august editorial forums propose for the Third World?

Have they forgotten the shameful and breath-taking U.S. record of dirty tricks after Allende was elected in 1970? How about the terror after Pinochet finally took power? Rounds of massive executions were conducted in the national soccer stadium, followed by thousands of "disappearances" as DINA, the dreaded secret police, seized its torture victims and marked those scheduled for assassination,

tracking their enemies as far as Washington, D.C. Then, as President Carter's human rights policies denied the dictator \$10 million annually, Chase Manhattan happily provided the regime with billions a year in loans.

The heavy hand of Pinochet can still be felt throughout Chile. The deal hatched in 1988 between Pinochet and the country's feckless civilian politicians blocked any chance of constitutional liberalization or real democracy. Indeed, Pinochet was named senator-for-life.

Pinochet successfully stripped labor unions of their power, handed over the education system to retired military officers, tolerated only pro-government newspapers and forced thousands to flee into exile. Chile's pluralistic human resources, painstakingly created over a



Pinochet enthroned.

generation, were dissipated around the world. Today, Chile has one of the most skewed concentrations of wealth in the world. Almost one-third of the population lives below the poverty line, while a bursting millionaire class engages in capricious consumption.

This is Pinochet's real legacy. It can't be ignored. ■

Larry Birns is the director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, D.C.

MARCELO MONTECINO



# The Death Squad Club Kid

By Catherine Orenstein

NEW YORK

**W**hite concrete barricades gird the roads, armed U.S. marshals patrol the streets and bomb-sniffing dogs have been dispatched at the Metropolitan Correction Center in Manhattan, where three suspects implicated in the August bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania are being held. Low concrete walls, intended to deter an Oklahoma City-style truck bombing, have also been erected around the Brooklyn building that houses New York's 911 system. These measures all are meant to protect us from terrorism.

But while fortifying government buildings against potential terrorist threats, few know that the U.S. government has been harboring an international terrorist right here. On October 22, the New York City Council unanimously passed a resolution calling for the deportation of former Haitian death squad leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant. Constant, who has been accused of ordering thousands of murders and tortures during Haiti's military regime from 1991 to 1994, has lived openly in Queens since June 1996—thanks to the U.S. government.

Constant fled Haiti after the American invasion in October 1994 and slipped into the United States on a tourist visa. He was arrested in May 1995 and ordered deported later that year. But, in a startling about-face, the Justice Department offered him a deal that set him free and postponed his deportation indefinitely.

Why this special treatment? Throughout his years in power, Constant was on the payroll of the CIA. By his own account, he received monthly payments in exchange for information and "agitation," which delayed the return of Haiti's left-leaning civilian government.

Constant is no longer the fierce, hawk-like figure who held press conferences in Port-au-Prince a few years back, machine gun in hand. Here in the United States, he has grown fat around the edges and developed delicate table manners. He sips his coffee with a raised pinkie and makes sly jokes about his notoriety. According to his deal with the government, he isn't

supposed to leave Queens. But, as he complained in an interview last year, how else can he get to Manhattan's Webster Hall, his favorite nightclub?

Officially, the State Department says Constant was released because the Haitian government wouldn't be able to give him a fair trial. "The Haitian government has requested his extradition—why should we second guess them?" asks Michael Ratner, an attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights—which has brought a \$33 million lawsuit against Constant's paramilitary group, FRAPH, on behalf of Alerie Belance, a Haitian refugee who was bludgeoned and left for dead in Haiti in 1993. "Even if the State Department's claim were true, why should he be walking around New York free?"

The most disturbing aspect of the City

Council hearings in October was the number of second-hand testimonies on behalf of those too afraid to appear in public. These refugees found their way to the seeming safety of our shores only to find their persecutor had followed suit. Meanwhile, Constant, who denies any wrongdoing, has made the most of American hospitality, eating at the corner Burger King, selling MCI phone cards and visiting Soho galleries.

"The New York City Council brought national attention to apartheid in South Africa and political repression in Northern Ireland," says Council speaker and gubernatorial candidate Peter Vallone. "Our goal here is to focus our conscience on the human rights abuses in Haiti and to force Washington to live up to its word in the fight against terror."

As it is, some terrorists are clearly more equal than others. ■

*Catherine Orenstein recently investigated human rights crimes in Haiti for the United Nations and the Haitian government.*



# Bullies in the Pulpit

By Dave Cullen  
Ft. COLLINS, COLO.

**W**here are all the churches? That's the part that puzzles me. The question hit me canvassing, just four days before Matthew Shepard's unconscious body arrived from Wyoming at Poudre Valley Hospital here.

In Ft. Collins there are two referenda on the local ballot stirring up a lot of anger. Human Rights Ordinances 21 and 22 would prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing and public accommodations. Opponents of the measures call themselves the "No Special Rights Committee." What's so special about a job and an apartment? About holding hands with your boyfriend without getting beat up? About begging for your life while a chunk of your skull is bashed through your brain stem? And yet the campaign is really heating up now: attack ads in *The Coloradoan*, literature strewn all over town warning of pedophilia, polygamy and the end of free speech as we know it.

month. What about next year? Will churches lose their voices once again, as 21 gay men and women are murdered in America because of their sexuality? (That was the Southern Poverty Law Center's estimate for 1996.) Hundreds of churches condemned Matthew's murder, and for that I'm exceedingly grateful. But far fewer have condemned the cause or confessed their own complicity.

The cause, that's obvious enough: Thieves don't normally string up their victims on a fence after they've helped themselves to the wallet. These guys hate queers, gays, whatever you want to call them—I'm sure Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney, the alleged killers, called them fags. You can bet they sneered every time they saw one, hated the sight of those stinking faggots.

It's tough, I know, for a lot of ministers, churches, bishops, popes. I don't envy their position. So many interpretations of the Bible. Some believe homosexuality is a sin, although no one claims Jesus ever gave it a passing mention.

But it's grown fashionable for so-called Christian leaders to appear on TV chat shows and disavow the slightest hostility toward gays—"We don't hate gays. We love the sinner, hate the sin." Easy words. Where are the loving acts? It's not the Westboro Baptist Church's picket of the funeral that disturbs me, or the fundamentalist protest outside a requiem for Matthew in Denver. Those are isolated cases. It's the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, the Roman Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Convention—a constant chorus of rebukes and denunciations, a long history of repudiation. They might not see it as hate, I'm sure some don't mean it as hate. But how are their congregations interpreting this? Is it any surprise to find so many who see us as sick, sex-crazed scum, intent on infecting their children?

How often have priests chastised their flock for the ugly attitudes in every community in this nation? The FBI compiled a thousand hate crimes in 1996 involving sexual orientation; every one of those happened in some parish—how many do you think got a mention that Sunday? How many positive appearances have gays made in those sermons?

What's the chance that Henderson and McKinney ever heard such a sermon? Suppose the nation's churches aren't contributing to the problem. How are they solving it? Isn't that their business? ■

**Dave Cullen** is a Colorado-based writer completing *Working Boy*, a memoir.

**The FBI recorded a thousand hate crimes in 1996 involving sexual orientation. Every one of those happened in some parish. How many got a mention that Sunday?**

Of course, I knew people were against us. It's just so disturbing to meet them face to face. The Christians, I still don't get it—what are they doing on that side? It was ministers and churches who led the civil rights movement: the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the Rev. Jim Lawson, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Where are the churches now?

The bridge-club lady, she's the one that stung. I'd been rebuffed worse at other houses—the guy in camouflage pants taking apart the beat-up Camaro, for example—but it was her sweetness that was distressing, so full of love for everybody else. She swung the door open with a warm, welcoming smile: "Well hello there!" Bouffant hairdo and pearls, so graciously deferential about the interruption—until she saw my pamphlet. "Oh. I'm actually against that." She backed up sheepishly, slid the door closed softly. I just stood there, staring into the dried wreath. Against it? Against me? Having an equal shot at a job or a home? It was Sunday afternoon, I wonder if she'd just come from church. I wonder what they had said about people like me.

It's been better since the murder—a horrible thing to say, a worse thing to see. It's been very different this



# Raining on Rudy's Parade

By Juan Gonzalez

**O**n the same day the Yankees won the 1998 World Series, yet another federal judge was forced to remind one Rudolph Giuliani that he is only the mayor of New York City, not the dictator of a police state—at least not this year.

On October 21, U.S. District Judge John Martin ordered city officials to grant a march permit to another



group of protesters that City Hall had tried to stifle. That day, lawyers for the city told Martin during a hearing in Manhattan Federal Court

that their refusal to grant a permit to the October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality march had nothing to do with the "content of their speech."

The group had requested a permit from police in early September, more than a month before their planned march. The city waited until the last moment to deny their request. The group was refused, city lawyer Virginia Waters told the judge, because of the "traffic problems" the march would cause. "The city does not grant parade permits on weekdays," she said, except for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

At the very moment Waters was telling that to the judge, city officials were leaking to reporters their plans for a massive ticker tape parade to be held for the Yankees in Manhattan's financial district—on a weekday.

Waters was either the dumbest lawyer on the city payroll or she was lying.

Not only has the city routinely held major parades for championship sports teams, but, on June 18, it allowed 13,000 hospital workers to hold a massive march through Midtown Manhattan at the height of the evening rush hour. And in July, it allowed hundreds of protesting taxi drivers to march down Broadway to City Hall at rush hour.

Quite understandably, Judge Martin wasn't buying the traffic excuse. He ordered that the police brutality march be held the next day. More than 1,000 people turned out, among them dozens of parents of youths beaten or killed by city cops.

The judge's order came only a week after police attacked a peaceful vigil in Manhattan by several thousand people who were outraged over the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. At the time of that attack, Giuliani was in New Hampshire on one of his many recent campaign swings around the country to

test the presidential waters. Asked about the police reaction, Giuliani lamented that the demonstrators "would have been granted a permit if they had given police a day or two notice."

So Giuliani blames one group of demonstrators for not asking permission a few days in advance, while one of his lawyers tells a federal judge that no march is allowed on weekdays. And other city officials prepare the biggest march imaginable for the Yankees on a moment's notice. These people have become so arrogant they no longer bother to get their lies straight.

But gay groups and those opposed to police abuse are not the only ones Giuliani has tried to clear off city streets. In mid-October, the mayor refused to permit Hispanic leaders to hold a welcoming parade for baseball slugger Sammy Sosa in the mostly Dominican area of Washington Heights. Giuliani ordered that the only place Sosa could be greeted was in the financial district and at City Hall, where Giuliani himself would be the center of attention.

Then there was the infamous Million Youth March in Harlem on Labor Day weekend, another protest

**In New York today, you'd think we were back in Birmingham with "Bull" Connor and George Wallace.**

Giuliani tried to ban. And there were the cab drivers this spring whom Giuliani tried to prevent from holding a motorcade around City Hall to protest draconian new taxi regulations. The mayor even tried to limit the size of opposition press conferences near City Hall earlier this year, and he ordered a ban on bus ads by a local magazine that ridiculed him. In all cases, federal judges ruled against the mayor.

Gays, Hispanics, blacks, immigrant cab drivers, political opponents, the press. So many New Yorkers have had to resort to the federal courts in the past year to protect their rights, you'd think we were back in Birmingham, Ala., with "Bull" Connor and George Wallace.

But Giuliani, like those would-be dictators from another era, answers each rebuff with fresh barbs aimed at the "imperial federal judges" who stand in the way of his crime fighting. Even as his cops trample the Constitution and batter down the doors of innocent blacks and Latinos in the dead of night, too many New Yorkers turn their heads. They burrow their noses deep in a pillow of fleeting privilege, as if this gathering horror will never reach their doorstep. ■

# The Vision Thing

## AN INTERVIEW WITH NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER JOHN HUME

By Kelly Candaele

**J**ohn Hume is the rarest of political figures. For more than 30 years he doggedly has pursued peace in Northern Ireland, initially as a civil rights activist in Derry, his hometown, and later as leader of the largest nominally Catholic political party in Northern Ireland, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). Over the years, he has combined a politician's grasp of the immediate needs of his community with a strategic vision of how a deeply divided people could be brought toward peace. In Northern Ireland, this is an all too unusual combination.

Hume's fingerprints are all over the so-called "Good Friday Peace Agreement" negotiated by former Maine Sen. George Mitchell and signed by most of Northern Ireland's major political parties in April. Twenty years ago, Hume outlined a political scenario for peace: a power sharing Northern Irish Assembly, a simultaneous democratic referendum of the people in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, and cross-border political structures linking the North and the South. He consistently has maintained that the ultimate political status of Northern Ireland should not be changed without the consent of the majority of its citizens. His vision is becoming today's political reality.

In an area of the world where the bitter divisions of history often have been mediated by the bomb and the bullet, Hume tenaciously has articulated a nonviolent philosophy. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October, an award he shares with David Trimble, first minister of the Northern Irish Assembly and leader of the Ulster Unionist Party.

Like most visionaries, Hume has not been admired universally. In 1993, after it was revealed that he was engaged in secret peace talks with Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin—the political party closely tied to the Irish Republican Army (IRA)—he was vilified in parts of the unionist community and in the Irish press. Major figures in his own party turned against him. When party colleagues suggested that the dialogue with Adams would damage the SDLP politically, Hume responded angrily by asking if they "wanted to keep the party alive or people alive."

He spoke with *In These Times* from his European Parliament office in Strasbourg, France.

**In These Times:** What were your feelings upon winning the Nobel Peace Prize?

**John Hume:** I've been extremely moved by the reaction I've received both at home and internationally. I had a standing ovation in the European Parliament from the representatives of all 15 countries. But I see it not simply as an award to myself but as a powerful statement of the international good will toward peace on our streets in Northern Ireland and good will toward all the people of Northern Ireland, given what they have suffered over the last 30 years.

**ITT:** What can people in other areas of conflict learn from what has occurred in Ireland?

**JH:** All conflict, when you study it, is about difference—whether it's your race, your religion or your nationality. The answer to difference is not to fight about it but to respect it, because difference is an accident of birth. The best way to do this in areas of conflict is to set up democratic institutions, which respect our differences but allow us to work together with one another in our common interests. Those common interests are largely social and economic. We have to spill our sweat, not our blood. This way, you build the trust and break down the barriers of centuries, which allows a new society to evolve based upon a respect for difference. That's what we are now doing in Northern Ireland.

**ITT:** How did you first get involved in politics in Northern Ireland?

**JH:** I didn't intend to get involved in politics. I was one of the first generation from my community to get free full-time education. My parents could not

afford to pay as my father was unemployed. Up until 1947, you couldn't go to high school or the university here without having to pay for it. 1947 was the first year of scholarships, and I got one. When I came back to Derry, I thought I had a duty to those not as fortunate as myself.

**ITT:** I understand that Martin Luther King Jr. was a great influence on you.

**JH:** In the '60s, most young people in Europe were influenced by the civil rights movement in America and by President John F. Kennedy. I often quote King in my speeches. The quote I use most often is one he took from Mahatma Gandhi: "The old doctrine of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind."



Nobel Peace Prize winners David Trimble and John Hume in May, after Irish voters approved the peace agreement.

AP/GERRY PENNY



**ITT:** Violence can be a very seductive thing. How do you psychologically overcome that desire for revenge?

**JH:** You cannot argue that you are working for the rights of other human beings if your methods undermine the most fundamental right of all, the right to live.

**ITT:** You've focused on very concrete issues in Northern Ireland like the right to jobs, fair housing and economic development, rather than the issue of a united Ireland, which has animated Sinn Fein and the IRA. Why?

**JH:** My father once told me you can't eat a flag. If you cannot earn a living in the land of your birth and you have to go elsewhere to do so, then the land of your birth is not worth much to you. So the most important thing for people is that they have a decent standard of living, and therefore it's our duty to do everything we can to assure they've got it. And of course, when they have that, it's a lot easier to deal with other problems.

**ITT:** You had secret talks with Gerry Adams in 1993 about ending the violence. What gave you the sense that the IRA and Sinn Fein might be interested in an alternative political solution?

**JH:** I knew that Sinn Fein and the IRA believed in what they were doing and were a product of Irish history. I felt that the reasons they were giving for their actions were out of date. So I asked them to state the reasons for their strategy. They said that the British were in Ireland defending their interests by force, and therefore the Irish had the right to use force to put them out. My reply was that yes, in the past Britain came into Ireland because of Ireland's links to European countries, but that was no longer true. Today's problem of a divided people was a legacy of that past, but that couldn't be solved by guns or bombs—it could only be made worse by deepening the division. That was the fundamental basis of the debate. Eventually, I was asked to prove that the context had changed. One proof was to get the British government to declare that they had no selfish economic or strategic interest in Ireland, and that the future of Ireland was a matter for the people of Ireland, north and south. That led to the Downing Street Declaration by the British Government, the cease fires and the peace talks.

**ITT:** You were vilified in the Irish press and even criticized by members of your own party for meeting with Adams. Was that the most difficult time in your political career?

**JH:** It was a very difficult time because I did get a lot of abuse and a lot of criticism. While I'm a public representative, I'm also a human being. But I knew what I was doing and I knew why I was doing it—so I had no apologies to make to anyone. I knew from the beginning that Gerry Adams was engaged in totally genuine dialogue with me. Twenty thousand British soldiers couldn't stop the killing on my streets, and I thought, if I could stop it or save a single human life by direct dialogue, it was my duty to do so. I privately felt there was a real chance of succeeding—so I kept at it.

**ITT:** There are still many critical issues, including arms decommissioning, that could derail the peace process. How can you make this peace stick?

**JH:** I think we have got the foundations for lasting peace. I don't like the comments of those who say we don't. Those

comments ignore the fundamental and historic things that have happened in Ireland. For the first time in our history, the people of Ireland as a whole, north and south, have voted with an overwhelming majority for this agreement as the basis for lasting peace. So anybody who seeks to overthrow that agreement seeks to overthrow democracy.

**ITT:** You don't agree with David Trimble that arms decommissioning should begin before Adams and other Sinn Fein representatives are admitted to the Executive Committee of the new government?

**JH:** I think it should be done parallel to the implementation of the rest of the agreement, as the agreement itself declares. This should be done to the satisfaction of all sections of the people, which includes the people Mr. Trimble represents. One of the aspects of the "Good Friday" agreement is total disarmament. All parties have to do everything in their power to bring about total disarmament.

**ITT:** You didn't take a leadership position in the new Northern Irish Assembly. Why?

**JH:** There's a limited amount of work that I can do. I'm a member of the European Parliament, and it's very important that we play a steady role there. I'm also a member of the British Parliament, so I couldn't take on any more work.

**ITT:** You've suffered from exhaustion and periodic depression. What personal sacrifices have you made in all of this?

**JH:** I don't think in those terms. I do my job. ■

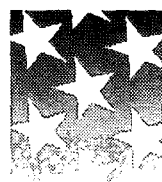
Kelly Candaele is a contributing writer for Irish America.



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# Finding the Third Way

## Directions for a "post-ideological" world

By David Dyssegaard Kallick

Last month, President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair met at New York University to talk about the politics of a "third way." Few journalists covered this unusual occasion and those who did mostly feigned incomprehension. Was there anything here other than muddy centrism?

As a matter of fact, yes. But asking Clinton and Blair to define the new politics is like asking surfers to explain why the ocean swells. They're not the major thinkers behind the movement—they're just along for the ride.

The "third way" is a political philosophy that poses an alternative to capitalism and communism. In recent years, it also has come to mean a politics beyond the narrow confines of liberalism and conservatism. Clinton and Blair are right to say we need to abandon the tired dichotomy of the two-dimensional political spectrum. But they're wrong when they imply the third way is just "post-ideological" problem-solving, or a bland triangulation to the middle. Americans should not confuse Clinton and Blair's compromising centrism with a real third way.

A genuine third way draws from far wider traditions than the current liberal-vs.-conservative context. While liberals stress the role of government (weakly echoing communism's vision of a state-dominated society) and conservatives stress the role of "free" markets (loudly trumpeting capitalism's vision of a market-dominated society), the third way seeks a balance between the public sector, the private sector and a strongly developed civil society. Instead of posing an alternative between "the state" and "the individual," the third way values both of these realms, but adds the in-between realm of community.

As we approach the end of the century, a third way seems more politically viable than ever. During the Cold War, capitalism and communism were hotly defended systems of belief, and proposing an alternative was seen as heresy or pie-in-the-sky posturing. Today, however, the American public is just waiting for the right suitor to come along—party loyalty is at an all-time low, and the public seems tired of the narrowing political options it is offered. It has been 30 years since the last time a serious alternative to liberalism commanded the attention of the Democratic Party. Ideas have evolved. It's time for a new attempt to dislodge liberalism

and replace it with a third way.

The idea is not altogether new. Successive waves of optimism about a third way have landed on American shores in the course of this century. The '20s saw smart socialists oppose communist ideals of state centralization. The '60s New Left favored questioning government and looking to leadership from other social actors, arguments that were co-opted by the '80s New Right. In the '70s, market socialists quietly proposed decentralized democratic control of business, while, in Germany, the Greens broadcast the slogan "neither left nor right but forward." Indeed, Scandinavian social democracy might be considered an actually existing third way.



"There's nothing new in the world," many will say, and it's true that today's third way draws on many first, second and third way ideas of the past. But, whether or not you call it a third way, the thinking it represents is a breath of fresh air in today's stale political climate.

Perhaps it is premature to talk of a single third way. No leader has emerged who can draw a coherent picture from the best of grass-roots politics and theoretical writing. Yet elements of a viable alternative are not hard to locate, especially if you look below the radar of the mainstream media. Strands of third way thinking are found in the writing of comparatively well-known authors such as Anthony Giddens, Joel Rogers or Benjamin Barber, and in the work of authors who ought to be known better such as Hilary Wainwright, Sam Smith and Stuart Hall. Other strands come from a myriad of local publications, or from the pages of those few national magazines that regularly cover them.

The major media don't see this new politics because their



reporters are looking in the wrong direction. Instead of looking "up"—to politicians like Clinton and Blair—they should be looking "down" to a new generation of leadership and "out" to a considerable body of nongovernmental experience acquired and understood at the grass roots.

Today's most compelling third way politics entails:

- \* Supporting market solutions without falling prey to the false promise of "free-market" power; enthusiastically promoting fair democratic ground rules to guide markets toward social aims (living-wage jobs, environmentally efficient production or long-term management goals).
- Rejecting bureaucracy and paternalism while implementing government services that are neither.
- Expecting solutions to social problems to come from not one but three sectors—government, business and civil society.
- Engaging the enormous untapped resources of poor people and disempowered communities, rather than instructing professionals or social workers to "take care of" people.
- Viewing systems as a whole (housing/economic development/childcare/welfare/safety or drugs/crime/jobs/school/community) rather than designing a separate program for every problem.

approaches to economic development. Each is connected with dozens of community groups that understand the difference between 6 and 9 percent interest rates on loans, the importance of overcoming the barrier of down payments in low-income communities, and strategies for incubating local small businesses.

A good number of environmental groups are looking beyond one-size-fits-all regulations to decision-making committees made up of local residents, workers and corporate managers. The process is called a "stakeholder" agreement, after the notion that all stakeholders, not just stockholders, should have a say in decisions that will affect them. Environmentalists turned to stakeholder agreements as a way to confront corporations directly when regulatory agencies such as the EPA were unresponsive or even hostile to their concerns. In the process, environmentalists developed and honed some useful models that might replace centralized regulation if—a big if—noncorporate players had sufficient resources and power in decision making. Sanford Lewis of the Good Neighbor Project in Waverly, Mass., has developed an impressive series of publications compiling examples and analysis of the stakeholder efforts ([www.envirolink.org/orgs/gnp](http://www.envirolink.org/orgs/gnp)).



- Seeking ways for ordinary people to participate fully in democratic life (including the development and articulation of third way thinking) rather than hoping for elitist new solutions from "the best and the brightest."

◦ Embracing, simultaneously, Walt Whitman-style, individualist self-expression, anti-authoritarianism and a community orientation (e.g., an eclectic community garden in New York's East Village, a group of skinheads organized against racism, participants in an unmoderated internet listserv).

Where is third way politics being implemented in practice?

Nowhere all at once, perhaps. But a significant measure of third way thinking can be found in a thick network of economic development groups pioneering new approaches to housing and neighborhood development. *City Limits* magazine in New York, the Woodstock Institute in Chicago and the Center for Community Change in Washington, D.C., are all hubs of information and activity about third way

expertise. For example, when patients who had problems that doctors did not believe were medical conditions insisted on pursuing their diagnoses together, they played an important role in identifying Lyme disease, carpal tunnel syndrome, toxin-related illnesses and black and brown lung disease.

Community organizers have opposed a "nanny state" as far back as the days when Saul Alinsky angrily accused welfare administrators of a "zookeeper mentality." This legacy continues in groups such as the Industrial Areas Foundation and ACORN, a national network of community organizations, which is organizing participants in New York City's welfare-to-work program to demand respect, decent pay and real job opportunities.

The new politics is still very fragmentary. Clever ideas abound here and there, system-challenging models emerge and disappear, a good program is put into place in one small location but not spread to others. There has not yet been a sustained attempt to turn all this into a political philosophy.

Part of the problem is power. Even the best political model can't be fully developed without opportunities to forge ideas in public debate or to test them at the level of national policy. An obvious start would be for third way activists to flesh out what government can do to help the kinds of projects described above. In the arena of economic development, there is an anticipatory buzz about Angela Blackwell's multimillion dollar effort, PolicyLink, a center designed to find ways policymakers can support this view of local economic development. Or, for instance, government could give teeth to environmental stakeholder agreements by providing resources to citizen groups and mechanisms to bring corporations to the bargaining table (such as a regulatory agency that would step in if no acceptable agreement was reached). In each policy area, government has a role that needs to be reconceived.

Revamping government services—or at least developing a blueprint for how to do it—is another piece of the puzzle. Welfare programs, to take the most highly charged example, are seen by the public as ineffective and even counterproductive. Life on welfare in the United States means life in poverty, and current programs (including almost all “welfare-to-work” initiatives) are doing little to help recipients. A third way approach would disentangle the politics of race from discussions of how to aid people who are out of work. It would dignify recipients by establishing decent minimum payments for welfare and by making sure there are varied opportunities for job training. People who want to work are often kept from jobs by problems with child care, transportation, family crisis or other factors to which holistically oriented welfare workers could attend—especially if they help mobilize resources in the community rather than simply relying on government services. In turn, by raising incomes, welfare can be used as an opportunity to create an upward pressure on wages and jobs throughout the economy.

Third way politics would also allow us to deal more honestly with problems of personal behavior and social norms such as racial divisiveness, sexual harassment or domestic violence. Without minimizing the legal victories of the civil rights movement or the important ways police protocols have begun to change around domestic violence, it is clear

that no legislation can achieve our goals in this area without corresponding social change. The public has long understood that these are not problems that can be solved in Washington—they must also be addressed in our communities and families.

Consciously changing community behavior requires informal networks to build personal relationships and institutions that people trust. These are the hallmarks of civil society. Whether the issue is battling domestic violence or fostering active parent involvement in schools, no amount of government exhortation is likely to coax people into a more active stance. Government can act in many ways to support civic organizations—it can even help fund them. Corporations also may be able to help—or be required to help—by allowing employees time off for participation in civic organizations. But neither government nor corporations can act in the way a group of local citizens can. Without the active participation of organized groups within civil society, we just won't make much headway.

Bringing a third way politics into full flower is ambitious. It requires even more than winning the presidency. It would mean building (or rebuilding) a vital political party with real grass roots, one that has close organizational and philosophical ties to the nongovernmental realm of civil society. A new political movement would involve individuals with aspirations in the private sector as well as government and nonprofit arenas, people with the entrepreneurial vision to create companies that can earn both a profit and maintain ethical social standards.

Some of this is already in place. Ellen Chesler of the Open Society Institute has pointed out that there is an extensive infrastructure of civil society organizations in virtually every community that did not exist 30 years ago. There is a tremendous backlog of experience and policy ideas built up in these organizations that is overripe for the picking. But there are not enough people or institutions whose job it is to synthesize the lessons learned, hone them in vigorous debate and translate them into national policy proposals.

Nor is there an effective mechanism for developing and running third way candidates for office. I gladly support the New Party, the Green Party and New York's Working Families Party—all of which aim to do this work. But none of these parties is nearly big enough to make the kind of changes described above. Third way politics badly needs an electoral identity, and supporters should get serious either about a concerted effort to take over the Democratic Party (locally if not nationally) or about putting enough energy behind one of the existing third parties to allow it to develop third way ideas and present them on the national scene.

Third way politics has substantial organizational strengths and weaknesses. But it also has a tremendous historical opportunity. Liberalism and conservatism are limping into the 21st century with less and less of a constituency. A new wave of “third way” thinking could provide a fresh and coherent approach to politics that is desperately needed. Maybe it's also what the public is seeking. ■

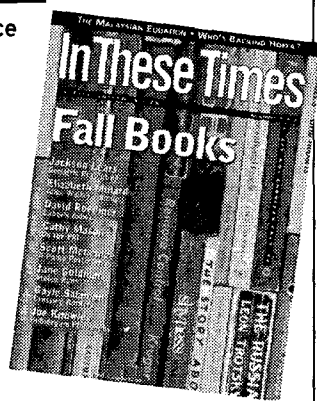
David Dyssegaard Kallick is senior fellow of the Preamble Center ([www.preamble.org](http://www.preamble.org)). Research for this article was funded in part by the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

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# GLOBAL REMEDIES



**To avoid a world economic crisis,  
we need more government  
... not less.**

**By David Moberg**

**C**onventional elite wisdom insists that nations and their governments are relics of the past, soon to be swept aside by the refreshing winds of global markets and replaced by efficiently benign competition among transnational corporations. Political leaders who stubbornly resist will be punished painfully in the financial marketplace. When markets finally rule and governments shrink, reason and prosperity will prevail.

As the Asian economic crisis turns more global and grim, this charming tale becomes a bit less credible. It's true that largely unregulated worldwide financial markets have weakened governments, but governments also have surrendered power unnecessarily and unwisely. Markets need governments more than the apologists of raw capitalism admit—and not just for arranging bail-outs of Japanese banks or American hedge funds. Capitalism doesn't work well without a strong, effective, democratic government. Global markets also need international governance, but for the foreseeable future that will rely on cooperation among governments that have a substantial ability to regulate their national economies in ways that are accountable to their citizens.

As the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) met this fall, their program—smaller government, less regulation, privatization, tight fiscal and monetary policies and free trade and capital flows—faced a steadily mounting backlash. There is growing recognition, for example, in the value of controlling capital flows out of countries to discourage short-term speculative investment, which harms developing countries like Thailand—where the Asian crisis began—by exposing them to unregulated global financial markets.

Despite evidence that unregulated floods of money are destabilizing the world's economy, the rich countries—the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—have continued to pursue the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which would deregulate international investment and strengthen the hand of transnational investors at the expense of governments. But France

withdrew from the talks in October, and the United States, reflecting pressures at home, said that the current draft agreement failed to protect labor rights and the environment. While the MAI talks at the OECD have stalled, the drive to deregulate global capital will continue at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international institutions. (For example, there were efforts in Congress to make MAI-style deregulation a condition of future IMF assistance.)

The Asian crisis—which led to the Russian default—spooked financial markets. There has been a steady withdrawal of investments from the newly submerging markets, a retreat from overpriced stocks and a great increase in financial volatility, which contributed to the unfolding hedge fund crisis and a nervous search for security, first in bonds, then in cash.

For nearly three decades, the policies and institutions—such as the World Bank and the IMF—drafted at the close of World War II in the Bretton Woods conference helped create a relatively stable and rapidly growing world economy. In the quarter century since the Bretton Woods agreement effectively collapsed, after President Nixon ended the convertibility of dollars into gold in 1973, financial volatility has increased as short-term financial speculation has soared to \$1.3 trillion in currency traded daily. Such volatility and high risk has led investors to make decisions with more of a short-range perspective and for central banks to be even more biased toward tight money policies, according to economist John Eatwell. It also has led to a proliferation of complicated “risk management” arrangements that give investors the illusion of safety but never remove underlying risk.

The bailouts of countries in financial difficulty engineered by the IMF have helped the big banks and other international investors far more than the countries and their people. Governments feel pressured to bail out large financial institutions, not only because of coziness between political and economic elites, but out of fear of a collapse of the whole system. But if governments are expected to stabilize the

system when it falters, they must have a hand in regulating behavior that can lead to crisis.

Everyone agrees that the distressed economies of Asia must grow, but there is little agreement on how. Most political leaders, including President Clinton, have touted free trade as the magic road to growth. Yet even Renato Ruggiero, director of the WTO, said recently that the burden of global economic recovery could not be placed on the world trading system and that the domestic markets in Asia must be revived. It is impossible for the United States to absorb enough exports to restart the world economy without destroying its own economy and the livelihood of workers here, especially since Europe recently rejected U.S. calls for increasing its imports of Asian products.

As markets dry up for exports to distressed economies—which are now trying to export their way out of depression with goods made cheaper by devaluation—the U.S. trade deficit is likely to nearly double next year to \$300 billion. Already, steel has been hit hard. Steelworkers President George Becker, who wants the government to set temporary limits on steel imports, says that because of brutal restructuring and new investment, “we have the most efficient steel industry in the world, but we can’t compete against what’s happening in Asia.”

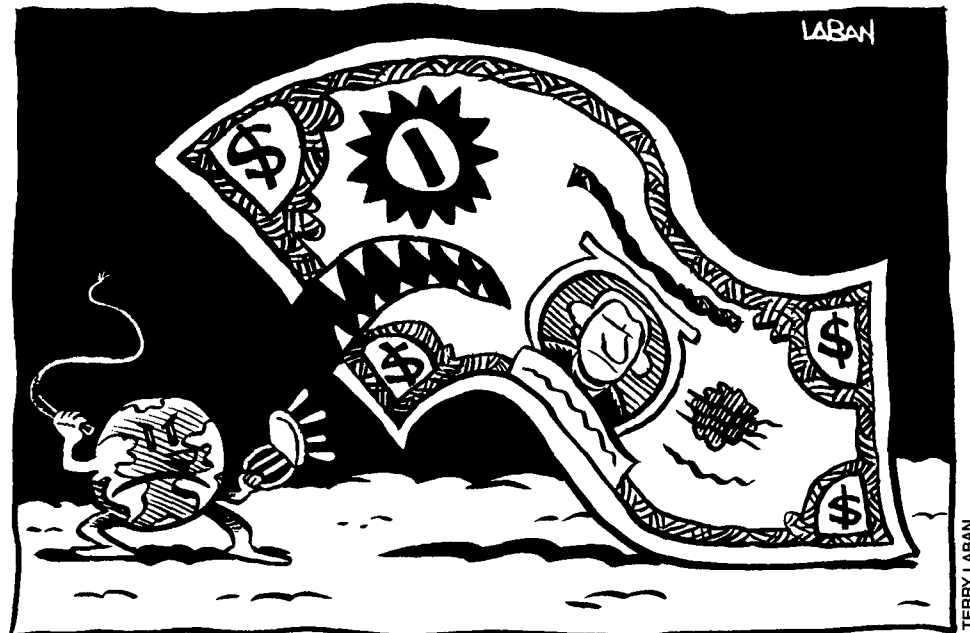
Further reductions in interest rates by the Federal Reserve and other central banks would be desirable, but easier money is not the solution. In Japan, rates are close to zero, but the economy is stagnating. Something more is needed to revive the “animal spirits” that Keynes saw at the heart of capitalism, which is driven as much by raw emotions of greed and fear as by rational calculation. Just as irrational exuberance led to many of today’s problems, irrational fears can compound themselves to turn trouble into panic. Capitalism needs a stabilizing gyroscope.

One of the main reasons why there has not been a great depression since the ’30s, argued the late economist Hyman Minsky, is because big government provides a steady source of income and consumption that bolsters confidence in the economy. But the newly industrializing economies lack a welfare state, and everywhere else the welfare state is under attack. Also, many regulations on finance dating from the Depression, which constrained speculation to minimize irrational booms and busts, have been loosened by national governments and the failure to control international financial markets.

When investors are either panicked or unwilling to make long-term investments, governments have the capacity to act as patient, long-term investors in their countries, borrowing against the future rather than cutting deficits to satisfy currency speculators or the IMF. In this way they can revive market demand and create a sense of confidence in the future, inspiring private investment. In developing countries, government investments in education, public health, environmental pro-

tection or sustainable energy and transportation projects could not only provide jobs to jump-start economic recovery, but improve the lives of the people who benefited least from the boom and are suffering the most from the bust.

Ultimately, restoring and expanding the purchasing power of the billions of the world’s poor is the highest priority for preventing the current crisis from spreading into an even



wider catastrophe. The Indonesian shoe worker is no less productive today than she was before the collapse of the rupiah. While it is welcome news that Reebok and Nike recently raised the minimum pay by 20 to 25 percent above the government minimum in Indonesia, the gesture still left those workers earning about one-third of what they did in dollar terms before the crisis. As both companies reap huge windfall profits, many Indonesians are close to starvation.

In this context, it was particularly appropriate for the Nobel Prize in Economics to be awarded to Amartya Sen, who is best known for his work demonstrating that famines are not the result of inadequate food supplies but inadequate incomes. He has argued that famines do not occur in democratic countries because their governments must respond to the needs of the poor. But Sen’s work has an even broader significance. As the world has turned away from the Keynesian-style management of the world economy—embodied in Bretton Woods—and toward a global free market regime, the rate of growth of global production has declined steadily, benefiting a minority of the world’s population. In 1965, the per capita income of the seven richest countries was 20 times that of the seven poorest; thirty years later it was 39 times as high. According to the United Nations Human Development Report, the world’s 225 richest individuals have wealth that is equal to the annual income of the poorest 47 percent of the entire global population. Spending just four percent of that wealth, or about \$40 billion a year, is all it would take to maintain universal access to basic education, health care, reproductive health care, adequate food, clean water and safe sewers



for everyone in the world. Taking care of basic needs of the poor could prevent a global depression.

There are numerous other measures—some modest, some grandiose—that can be taken to tame the global financial beast and restore power to national governments. Ultimately, there is a need for a new Bretton Woods agreement that restores the social mission of global full employment and human rights to the heart of regulation of the world economy. In the meantime, there are less ambitious possibilities. For example, Jane D'Arista, a banking expert at Boston University Law School and the Economic Policy Institute, has proposed stabilizing the world economy with new financial regulations and an investment fund for developing countries run by the World Bank. In a related vein, there is growing interest in a small tax on all international financial transactions, which could dampen speculative fluctuations and generate development funds.

Governments must reassert their determination to make markets serve the interests of all their citizens and provide a rising and sustainable standard of living. But it is important, Sen has argued, not to confuse living standards with an "opulence" of commodities. A good standard of living has less to do with piling up goods than with realizing personal capacities. Likewise, the measure of a good society is not just the quantity of goods produced but the satisfaction of human needs.

The market may do some things well, but it is woefully inadequate in achieving a good standard of living for everyone. Government does not provide all the answers either, but the power of the state is necessary to regulate the market and to introduce more democracy into the economy. The more democratic the government, the better job it is likely to do, not only in averting famines and investing for the social good, but in creating the climate in which even markets can perform best. And the better organized its citizens, whether in unions, political parties or interest groups, the more democratic governments are likely to be. Globalization—through crises such as the one the world is now entering—may not end up wiping out governments and nations but reminding us just how important they are. ■

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# HISTORY OR MYTH?

## AFROCENTRICITY IS UNDER ATTACK BUT MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN EVER

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

A group of Afrocentric scholars and activists gathered in Philadelphia in October to batten-down the hatches and firm up solidarity in the face of heightened assaults on their embattled doctrines. The 10th annual Cheikh Anta Diop Conference (named for the Senegalese anthropologist) was held at Temple University's African-American Studies department—a program that, under the leadership of Molefi Kete Asante, had been the most successful Afrocentric curriculum in the country. However, incessant infighting convinced Asante to resign as department chair earlier this year, and the remaining faculty are struggling to retain an Afrocentric orientation.

The internal problems at Temple are symptomatic of the increasing hostility toward Afrocentrists, even as their ideas are becoming more influential. Right-wing academic groups like the National Association of Scholars assail Afrocentrists' "shoddy scholarship," while those on the left warn of its racial chauvinism and biological essentialism. "We do seem to be under increasing assault," Asante says. "But I've been under attack since I began this work, so I'm not at all discouraged or deterred by them."

The term "Afrocentricity," in its current usage, is Asante's invention. His 1980 book, *Afrocentricity*, is widely considered the founding manifesto of the movement. "It's a very simple idea," Asante once wrote. "It consists of interpretation and analysis from the perspective of African people as subjects rather than as objects on the fringes of the European experience." (Many scholars explicitly use the word "Afrocentricity," or African-centered, rather than "Afrocentrism" to further distinguish the theory from Eurocentrism.)

Since Afrocentricity is an outgrowth of cultural black nationalism, it also is concerned with the rehabilitation of a black identity that nationalists argue was shattered by slavery and its legacy. Seeking to recover a history that they contend has been obscured by racist distortions, most Afrocentrists employ a black nationalist historiography that emphasizes the influence of civilizations of northeastern Africa—namely Kemet, Nubia, Axum and Meroe (areas now known as Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan). Because of their value as symbols of African accomplishment during a period in which Europe was in the so-called "Dark Ages," the medieval empires of Western and Central Africa (Mali, Songhai, Kanem-Bornu, Benin and Ghana) also are a focus of Afrocentric attention. According to Diop, "Egypt is to Africa as Greece is to Europe." Asante explains: "This means that it is anterior in many concepts and constructs. To concentrate on

cultures that are derived from Egypt without discussing Egypt would be like putting the cart before the horse."

For some, Afrocentricity is a fashion statement; for others it's a form of spirituality. Many advocates urge the insertion of Afrocentric epistemology and pedagogy into academia, while others push for Afrocentric curricula in elementary and secondary schools. There also are professed Afrocentrists who subscribe to Manichean "Ice People/Sun People" doctrines or varied forms of "melanism" (the doctrine that the pigment melanin endows blacks with human supremacy). But the notion that black people are biologically superior and other essentialist doctrines generally are discredited by serious Afrocentrists. Afrocentricity, Asante says, "is not, nor can it be based on, biological determinism."

The term "Afrocentricity" is new, but a body of black nationalist, mostly autodidactic, scholarship has had a long-established presence on the intellectual fringes of the



STEVE ANDERSON

black community. In the 19th century, scribes like James Horton, Edward Blyden, Henry Turner, Samuel Johnson and Martin Delany were writing about the wonders of Africa and the need for black Americans to behold those wonders. Leaders like Paul Cuffee, Bishop Henry Turner and Samuel Crowther, meanwhile, were urging actual repatriation. At the beginning of the 20th century, William Ferris wrote of black Ethiopians bringing culture to Egypt. Historian J. A. Rogers published many volumes about blacks' long-denied contributions to high culture.



In 1913, in Newark, N.J., Timothy Drew changed his name to Noble Drew Ali and established the Moorish Science Temple. Ali declared that Islam was the original religion of black people, or as he preferred, "Moors." A year later Jamaican Marcus Garvey created the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which touted the glories of African antiquity, pushed a radical kind of pan-African nationalism (urging a literal as well as cultural repatriation) and, by the '20s, attracted the largest membership of any Afrocentric group before or since. In the '30s, the Nation of Islam of W.D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad began pushing alternative cosmologies and genesis narratives that reversed the dominant ideology of white supremacy.

The explosion of the civil rights and black power movements in the second half of the century provoked a more expansive conception of history, and African-American students demanded a more inclusive curriculum. A host of new authors emerged to fill this need. In 1977, Maulana "Ron" Karenga, the founder of Kwanzaa, first published *Introduction To Black Studies*, a prototype of Afrocentric scholarship. Karenga wrote of cultural continuities between African and African-American culture and emphasized the accomplishments of African antiquity.

During this period, British writer Basil Davidson, one of the few whites welcomed into the expanding canon, also penned many volumes stressing Africa's triumphs. English translations of Diop's work also began to appear. In 1974, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth Or Reality?* was published in the United States for the first time. In it, Diop argued that Egyptian civilization had its origins in inner Africa and became the archetypal model for many subsequent African civilizations.

By 1978, a corpus was developing. Black historian Jacob Carruthers established the Kemetic Institute in Chicago, a repository for information on black nationalist historiography. Two years later, Asante transformed Temple University's black studies department into a center for Afrocentric discourse. Karenga's Institute of Pan-African Studies in Los Angeles linked up with the Kemetic Institute in 1984 and formed the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations.

With an institutional focus, a growing demand for information that challenged Eurocentric assumptions and an unlikely push from popular culture, the Afrocentric movement exploded in the '80s. In 1987, Martin Bernal, a white professor of government at Cornell University, published the first volume of *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, which added a considerable level of scholarship to many Afrocentric arguments. Bernal argues that Africa was widely accepted as a precursor to Greek (and thus Western) civilization until the mid-19th century, when a new "Aryan model" arose to accommodate the new "racial science" that held Africans and Asians to be inherently inferior to Europeans. One of the common arguments of the European classicists, Bernal says, is "We don't care where all these things originated; what we care about is Greece." But this is paradoxical. Here are historians interested in European origins who suddenly say 'Stop, let's get off the game here. We'll stop at Greece.' "

**A**frocentricity since has insinuated itself into black America. Not only has it colored a part of African-American pop culture—showing up in hip-hop recordings and the "X" fashion phenomena of the early '90s—it has also gained in voice in

educational curricula. "African-American children get enormous benefits from seeing their ancestors and counterparts as agents rather than supplicants," says Asa Hilliard, an education professor at Georgia State University.

Afrocentric educators believe the high rate of academic failure among African-American children, especially in urban areas, is partially attributable to the growing cultural discontinuities between the classroom and the community. "Many folks realized that a major source of school failure among African-American children derived from the conflict between the culture they brought to the schools and the Eurocentric school orientation that refused to recognize their cultural proclivities," says Conrad Worrill of Northeastern Illinois University's Center for Inner City Studies in Chicago.

Many advocates of Afrocentric curricula argue that it is most useful for the sense of cultural esteem it confers on African-American students. "African-centered learning makes scholarship relevant to black children," explains Hannibal Afrik, a retired public school teacher and director of the independent Shule Wa Toto school in Chicago. "Critics of Afrocentricity often condemn it for using scholarship-as-therapy, but they seem to overlook the therapeutic chauvinism of Western scholarship."

By 1991, about 350 private schools devoted to the Afrocentric approach had been established, educating more than 50,000 children, and the numbers continue to grow. Numerous public school authorities also have introduced Afrocentric curricula—including wholly Afrocentric schools—into predominately black districts. Detroit, in addition to hosting nine African-centered academies, also has 21 public schools that use an Afrocentric curriculum. According to a 1993-94 survey, student performance at the African-centered academies was better than district norms. Not only were scores higher, but attendance rates and student behavior also improved.

**I**n academia, a concerted counterattack has been mounted against Afrocentricity. In general, opponents stress historical inaccuracies of Afrocentric historiography and condemn the effort to employ history as an esteem booster. The very title of Mary Lefkowitz's 1996 book, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History*, aptly capsulizes their primary complaint. Lefkowitz, a professor of Greek and Roman Classics at Wellesley College, attacks the arguments about the racial identity of historical figures like Cleopatra and Socrates. More broadly, she critiques the notion that Greek civilization was derived in large part from an Egyptian civilization primarily African in character.

In many ways, Lefkowitz and other critics focus on straw man arguments, discredited by all but the most extreme Afrocentrists. What's more, according to Asante, she is elaborating on a misconception. "Afrocentricity is not about specific facts, but about orientation to facts," he says. "Cleopatra's color is not the issue with us. Our issue is placing African people within our own historical framework."

Understanding history helps teach us who we are and why. But a full understanding of our collective history requires a critique of its Eurocentric biases. Afrocentricity is one angle of that critique. We all can gain perspective from its insights. After all, as the recent findings of molecular genetics have revealed, we all are Africans. ■

# Not Straight, but Still Narrow

By Michael Warner

Imagine an 8-year-old boy going to his mother and asking "if God really knew everything about you, if He could see into every part of you and know exactly what you were thinking and feeling." And when she answers yes, the boy replying, "Then there's no hope for me, Mum."

That Andrew Sullivan tells this story of himself says something about the very personal candor that is one of the strengths of *Love Undetectable*. The boy's almost paranoid fear and guilt leads him, as Sullivan puts it, to become "brittle, neurotic." In adolescence, he compensates for the tyranny of this God-like superego with the classic pattern that Freud called anal retentive: extreme orderliness, compulsive cleaning, obstinacy, control. (Sullivan discusses Freud with sympathy, and at some length.) Given this background, which may sound familiar to many of us with religious childhoods, it is not surprising that

## Love Undetectable: Notes on Friendship, Sex, and Survival

By Andrew Sullivan  
Knopf  
252 pages, \$23

Sullivan encountered sex as an uncontrollable, dangerous taste of a long-denied freedom and contact. But in the end, it's the superego, that inescapable watching eye, that seems to have won out—much more than the author seems to realize—both in his former career as editor of *The New Republic* and in this new book.

The book consists of three connected essays: on AIDS, gay psychology and friendship. Running through each is a narrative so scarred with pain that the book feels more like a confession than anything else. In the first piece (interrupted by a religious epiphany that sounds rather like an acid trip), Sullivan gives us a chilling account of his own sense of fear and despair after testing HIV-positive, of the dilemmas he faced over disclosing his status, of his long and still unresolved struggle with guilt and shame over sex. In the second, he tack-

les his nagging fear that he is not, as he puts it, "normal"—that no matter how out and affirmative, there will still be something pathological in homosexuality. And in the final essay, he describes the comfort and strength he found in friendship, particularly in his unsettling bond with a man named Patrick, who died of AIDS.

Woven into these confessional stories is a polemic. AIDS, Sullivan argues, has left gay men more mature, ready to leave behind the pathologies of sex and seek the higher ground of marriage and friendship. Sometimes, it must be said, the polemic works. The middle piece mounts a very powerful rebuttal to the right-wing account of gay pathology in what is called "reparative therapy." It works because Sullivan takes the time to walk through the right-wing arguments.

Sullivan at his best is capable of writing with more humanity than his critics often credit him for. Indeed, one can find brief passages throughout the book in which something like an anti-Sullivan seems to have wrestled his laptop away from him. "The way our culture has set up the debate—between puritans and libertines, between indiscriminate supporters of promiscuity and prophets of sexual doom—does no justice to life as it is actually lived, and to the human beings trying to navigate through it." True enough. One wishes only that Sullivan had remembered this himself.

Again, while refuting pathologizing accounts of homosexuality, he makes a refreshing appeal to experience, noting that the gay men in his acquaintance are so different that no psychological

account of homosexuality will do justice to their variety: some effeminate, some not; some close with their mothers or hostile to their fathers, others the reverse; some uninterested in monogamy, others desperate for it; some

who feel conflict between committed love and promiscuous sex, others for whom these seem easily complementary. "All human types," Sullivan concludes, "are foiled by human reality." But this insight disappears whenever Sullivan wants to make his own generalizations.

"Pathology can be an extremely slippery thing," he admits later. "We are particularly prone to discern it in minorities that are defined by the majority, people

whose very terms of discourse have been created by the people attempting to keep them in their place." Yet this doesn't stop him from pathologizing gay male sexuality. By pathological, he says, he means "repetitive, desperate, and conflict-ridden behavior that must always fail to solve the problem that occasions it." On his own account, this describes his experience of sexuality. But he takes it for granted that the same applies to everyone else as well. For Sullivan, "homosexuals" too often means "Andrew."

He complains that people see him as intolerant, stigmatizing and condescending toward "leather daddies and lipstick lesbians, the drag queens and diesel dykes, the purveyors and marketers of camp and irony." How unfair! "Nothing," he claims, "could be further from the truth." But in the very next sentence—the sentence that is supposed to show how he is not intolerant, stigmatizing or condescending—he refers to these people as "products of a long his-



Andrew Sullivan

tory of isolation and marginalization." And, he goes on, "insofar as these cultural expressions are also products of deep and searing anxiety, of the inability to be a publicly gay man or woman except as a caricature of one gender or another, then they are no more to be clung to than excruciating racial stereotypes. There is a difference between a culture of difference and a rationalization of pain." Sullivan cannot refrain, even for the space of this paragraph, from pathologizing those whose pleasures and identities differ from his own. What reason does he advance for his judgment? What is the store of expertise that allows him to declare others' pleasures to be "a rationalization of pain"?

The answer turns out to be his own pain. When he writes that, as a Catholic, he has "always felt the spiritual and sexual lives to be, at the deepest level, in conflict," you have a sense of the problem. He seems incapable of imagining that for others this might not be true, let alone that his own over-identification with moral authority might itself be seen as a rationalization of pain, or that his description of his own religious life would often seem to fit his definition of "pathological" more closely than does the gay culture he denounces. What is by his own account a damaging case of Catholic guilt has been taken as a universal law. It may come as a disappointment, Andrew, but I don't feel your pain.

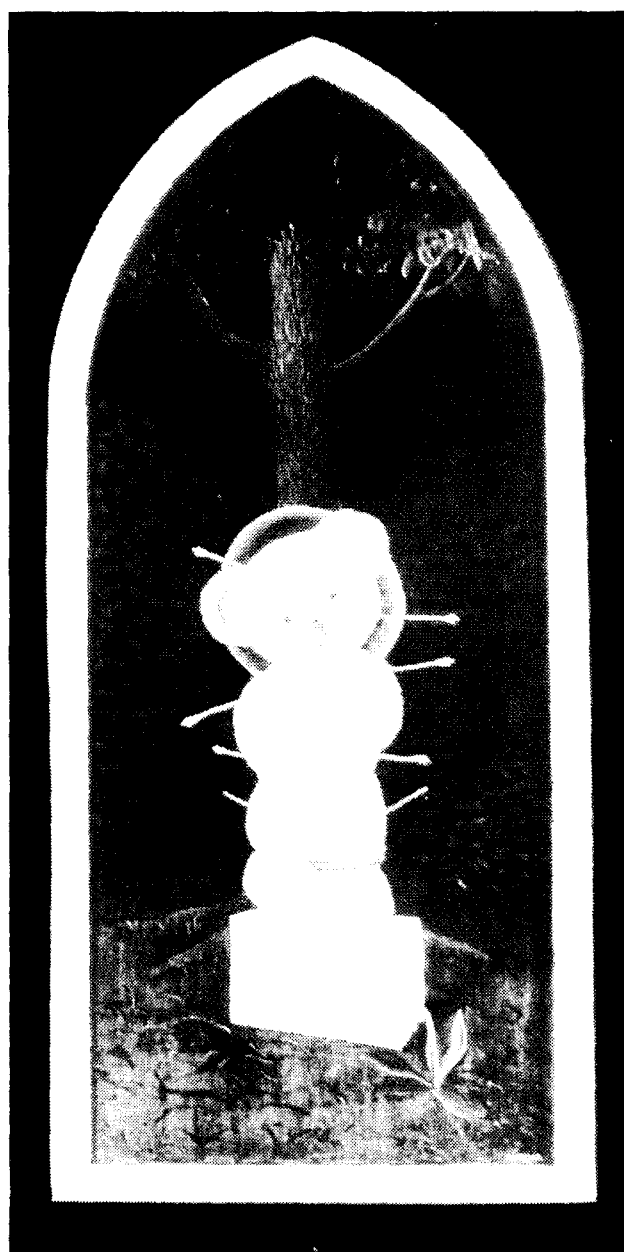
Sullivan thinks his opponents call him a "gay conservative" simply because "it is easier to label than to listen." But he shows plenty of willingness to label in return, and little sign of having read the works of those whom he so smugly dismisses. "There is little doubt," he declares, drawing himself up in full pomp, "that the ideology that human beings are mere social constructions and that sex is beyond good and evil facilitated a world in which gay men literally killed each other by the thousands." This is hardly worth arguing against. Mere social constructions? Literally killed each other? In the same passage, Sullivan blames "gay liberationists" for believing that "saving lives was less important than saving a culture of 'promiscuity as a collective way of life,' when, of course, it was little

more than a collective way of death." Since the quoted phrase is mine, I can tell you that Sullivan quotes it from a passage in which I was describing how he tends to stigmatize gay men who have sex, and here he's done it again. He imagines a false choice: saving lives or saving promiscuity.

But what if gay male sexual culture was and remains a resource that has allowed people to shift over to safer sex—together, publicly and creatively—as a way of saving lives? To call it "a collective way of death" is simply to ignore safer sex, and the role that a promiscuous culture played in making it possible. Sullivan implies that all promiscuity is unprotected, that it is all risky, that it is homicidal and that it is always incompatible with intimacy and love.

Sullivan prides himself on clarity, consistency and rigor of argument. But these are not, in fact, his strong points. The book is riddled with unexamined terms (such as "normal"), logical leaps and glaring contradictions. Sometimes the argument is simply irresponsible. He writes as though AIDS were over, even though he takes pains to acknowledge that AIDS is still going on, that gay men continue to get infected, that the vast majority of people with HIV have

no access to the expensive drugs, that many of those lucky enough to get them are seeing the virus rebound. "When Plagues End" is, in fact, the title of the book's first essay, a different version of which ran in *The New York Times Magazine*. After Sullivan's piece appeared, contributions to AIDS organizations dropped precipitously. Gay Men's Health Crisis now faces a \$2 million shortfall for this year, and has laid off scores of people in desperation. Why? Because the organization's donors—many of them just the sort of well-heeled gay men



*St. Snugglebear* by Dick Detzner, oil on panel. From **Corporate Sacrilege**, an exhibition of Detzner's new work showing at the Yello Gallery in Chicago through November 30th.

COURTESY OF YELLO GALLERY, CHICAGO



who, like Sullivan, reap the full benefits of the new treatments—have come to the same conclusion: the plague is over. For them.

In the last chapter, Sullivan rightly emphasizes the importance of friendship in gay culture. But this could be seen as a portrait of intimacies that are an alternative to marriage. Sullivan thinks that “sex between friends is something to be avoided at all costs,” that love and friendship are wholly distinct. But for many gay men, tricks become friends, friends cross into sex and back again, both tricks and friends can become lovers, ex-lovers can be friends or even tricks, and friends who don’t have sex can bond over their common sexual lives. Some of us have relations simultaneously that run the gamut from long-term lover to fuckbuddies, surrounding us with a web of intimacies that is also a sexual culture. All of this is utterly falsified by Sullivan’s idealization of marriage as the only valid context for intimacy, love and sex. And as usual, when Sullivan talks about marriage, he treats the relation and the legal regulations as one and the same. The implication is that passage of some new law will make it easier for gay men to find boyfriends.

In the end, as this tortured, un-self-knowing book veers from confession to sermon, it leaves its most human insights behind. Sullivan has a large following, mostly of men who share his sense of isolation, and of a lifelong war between shame and yearning. But Sullivan’s solution to these problems is a version of morality that remains too restricted and too willful to be much more than moralism. It perpetuates the cycle of shame and yearning, and this tension is audible in the frustrated piety and simmering resentment of Sullivan’s prose. For those who are not already among the converted, this book’s flaws are hardly undetectable. ■

**Michael Warner**, professor of English at Rutgers, is the editor of *Fear of a Queer Planet* and author of several books on American literature. He has also written for *The Village Voice*, *The Nation*, *The Advocate*, *Poz* and other journals.



GERARD VALCIN

## The Flow of History

By Cameron Crouch

**H**art Crane once described the Mississippi River as “tortured with history.” So too is the island of Hispaniola, shared by the often-conflicting nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The flanking parts of the two republics, while marred with a history of racism, tension and occupation, reveal a bittersweet co-dependence, symbolized best in the fields of sugar cane in the Dominican Republic. There, for generations,

**The Farming of Bones**  
By Edwidge Danticat  
Soho  
312 pages, \$23

Haitian laborers have harvested this staple to the Dominican economy, despite the European-blooded Dominicans’ disdain for them. Politically, the two nations also share painful memories of ruthless despots, including Haiti’s Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier and the Dominican Republic’s Rafael Trujillo.

During the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924, the Marines created a military constabulary that became the training ground for future Dominican leaders. One such student was Trujillo who, in 1930, revolted against President Horacio Vasquez to take control of the country. Trujillo’s reign as generalissimo, while introducing some degree of economic prosperity to the republic, was marred by human and civil rights abuses. In October 1937, under his

orders, Dominican troops massacred thousands of Haitians living near the border in a horrific act of ethnic cleansing.

This turbulent period is the backdrop for Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat’s new novel, *The Farming of Bones*. (Her previous books are another novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, and a short story collection, *Krik! Krak?*, which was nominated for the National Book Award.) *The Farming of Bones’* narrator is Amabelle Désir, a young Haitian who was taken in by a Dominican family to work for their daughter, Señora Valencia, and her husband, Señor Pico, an officer under Trujillo. Outside of this life of servitude, Amabelle has a Haitian lover named Sebastien Onius, with whom she plans to return to Haiti. Flowing in and out of Amabelle’s nightmarish dreams and slowly disintegrating reality, the novel explores the personal and practical relations between Haitians and Dominicans. Danticat reveals not only the obvious historical links, but the very private—and often painful—links between these peoples, ties that somehow manage to subvert the barriers of language and culture that separate the two countries.

Danticat recently spoke with *In These Times* in San Francisco.

**In These Times:** Unlike your previous works, which center on Haitian women during the regime of “Baby Doc” Duvalier, *The Farming of Bones* covers both the Haitian and Dominican perspectives in

1937 when Trujillo ordered the murder of Haitians living across the border. Why did you choose this earlier period?

**Edwidge Danticat:** I've always been interested in history and how it affects us today. With the Dominican Republic, its history is interesting to me because two different groups of people share what is geographically one island. We share back-and-forth strife and debate.

**ITT:** Julia Alvarez also wrote of this period in her book, *In the Time of the Butterflies*, but from the Dominican perspective. Do you see yourself as telling the Haitian side of the story?

**ED:** I'd always wanted to tell this story, and Julia's book having come before made me more comfortable to write mine, in the sense that she writes about the massacre ordered by the dictator focusing mainly on his mission and how it affected Dominicans—though there are also Haitians in her book. I'd always wanted to tell the story because I knew so many people whose families migrated to the Dominican Republic, whose fathers went there to work in the sugar cane. I wanted to deal with it because it's part of the history we Haitians share with the Dominican Republic. In the same way there can be many things written about say, Mussolini, there can be thousands of narratives written about such people as Duvalier or Trujillo, because each individual those leaders affected has a story.

**ITT:** In the novel, there's mention of the Yanks' occupation (1915-1934) and how that drove a lot of people to the Dominican cane fields. What are your thoughts on U.S. policy toward Haiti?

**ED:** Trujillo was a student of, and trained by, the U.S. military. He was trained as the military heir to the island once the occupation was over, so there's some interplay. The Haitian military that we had until recently was created under that U.S. occupation, so was Trujillo's army. I don't think it's a blame game, but you have to acknowledge the responsibility of the United States.

**ITT:** There are a lot of parallels between Haitian and Dominican characters in the book. There's an identification between the Haitian, Kongo, who loses his son, and the Dominican, Papi, who loses his grandson. Amabelle herself is torn in her grief for these deaths.

**ED:** There were a lot of people suffering then, especially along the border. I

wanted to show the many ways that the two groups met amicably even when larger things were happening that may not have been harmonious. There were many people dying on both sides.

**ITT:** Names and language bear enormous significance in *The Farming of Bones*. First, Amabelle's last name is *Désir*. The Dominican sisters, Dolores and Doloritas ("sadness"), love the Haitian *Ilestin* ("he is well"). And the novel tells the story of a young Trujillo chasing a Haitian through the fields, demanding he yell out which field he was in or be shot. When the man yelled the Spanish word for parsley, *perejil*, Trujillo discovered that the word was a means to identify the Creole-speaking Haitians—they could not pronounce the rolling r or the Spanish j.

**ED:** Language is an identifier, it's as if it's marked on the skin. It's what differentiates us from others. For the Dominican Republic and Haiti, there is a strong sense of language being used as a border.

**ITT:** In this novel as well as in your previous works, the characters seem to move in cycles. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Sophie

returns to Haiti with her daughter after having left as a child to go to her mother. At the end of *The Farming of Bones*, Amabelle returns to the river, the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where she watched her parents drown and saw many others murdered.

**ED:** The river and the ocean have always been important. People have written songs about those who, coming from Africa on slave ships, jumped into the water thinking they were going back to Africa. With Haiti, being on an island, the water cycle is obviously there. To Amabelle, the river is a spot that represents moments of loss. By retracing them, taking a piece here, there, she might get the whole picture. The river and her return to it, like her return to *Alegría* to see Señora Valencia, represent moments she's trying to understand, in her efforts to find a whole meaning. In the end, her return to the river is a kind of forced baptism, one that doesn't work. ■

Cameron Crouch is a freelance writer based in San Francisco.



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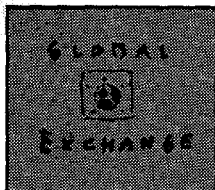
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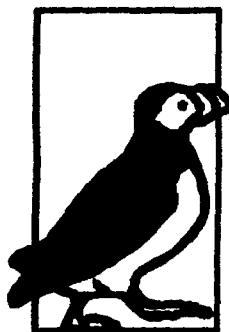
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Continued from page 30

with its amusing caricatures of Gore Vidal and Susan Sontag.) The best episodes of *The Simpsons* contain layer after layer of cultural references—to literature, film, current events, Gilbert and Sullivan, what have you. The show's pace and texture constantly subvert the premise that *The Simpsons* takes place in Anytown, USA. If the global village had a name, it might be Springfield.

By contrast, the setting of *King of the Hill* is so regionally precise that Arlen might as well be on the map. King is archetypally Texan—right down to the clock on the Hills' wall, shaped like the state itself. The locals face problems with tornadoes and fire ants. The junior high school is named after Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry. And a helpful clerk at Arlen's department store will point you to the children's gun section.

But the show's unexpected popularity cannot derive solely from its attention to little details of Texas life (note-perfect as they are). Its appeal, I think, is a matter of tone. The world of *King of the Hill* is far smaller and more intimate than Springfield. On *The Simpsons*, minor characters represent a surprisingly broad range of social strata: from the fabulously wealthy Mr. Burns to the homeless. In Arlen, the extremes of class hierarchy somehow seem narrower. At its pinnacle is the owner of Strickland Propane—who bears some resemblance to LBJ, and shares the late president's tendency to call meetings with subordinates while enthroned in the bathroom. At the other extreme is the Hill's niece, LuAnne. She moved in with the family after her mother was sent to prison for attempting to kill her father with a fork during an altercation in their trailer home.

Another way to define the quality of *King* might be to say that its tone embodies humor, rather than wit. Wit is quick, sharp and highly verbal; it revels in allusion and rapid brilliance. (The writing of *The Simpsons*, at its best, is witty). Humor is slower and gentler. It focuses on personality and daily life. But unlike wit (which tends to be mocking), humor laughs at people's weaknesses without forgetting they may also be closely tied to more admirable qualities. LuAnne, for instance, is not terribly bright. She is constantly on the verge of flunking out of beauty school. But she is sensitive, and has a creative streak (manifested in her work on a Christian hand-puppet show). She is also aware that not everyone enjoys her access to higher education.

The cultural politics of *King of the Hill* have fascinated me from the start. Essential in this regard is the complex figure of Peggy Hill. An attentive mother and a consummate professional (she takes pride in grading all exams within 24 hours), Peggy expresses great irritation at being called a feminist—merely because she demands absolute recognition of her equality with Hank and of her social value as a teacher.

Indeed, it is striking—and very unusual for television—that both Hank and Peggy take considerable pride and satisfaction in their work. Yet their world is threatened by factors and trends over which they have little control. Small businesses in Arlen are menaced by competition from a chain store, the Mega Lo Mart, with its everyday low prices and behemoth corporate backing. A brown-nosing young manager trainee—freshly minted MBA in hand—imposes Total Quality Management at Strickland Propane (with disastrous results). A Mexican truckdriver tells Hank about the economic impact of NAFTA, which sent all the piñata jobs north. And a computer error at the video store causes the Hills' mailbox to be flooded with advertisements for pornography.

Accompanying the impersonal forces sweeping through Arlen—and nearly as disruptive—is the culture of therapeutic discourse: those bureaucrats of self-esteem who want you to get in touch with your feelings, dammit. One such character (nicknamed "Twig Boy," on account of his skinny frame) accuses Hank of being an abusive father, which he certainly is not. The operating assumption of these psychobabblers is that the problems people face are the product of family dysfunction—not economic factors.

As the saying goes, it takes a village—but *King of the Hill* is uncharacteristically merciless in its treatment of cultural Oprah-fication. Hank is a tolerant and good-natured man. Yet the technicians of sensitivity treat him with barely disguised contempt, and he returns the favor. But they at least have faces, unlike the corporations that prove more menacing in the long run.

While a spirit of regionalism suffuses every episode of *King of the Hill*, I wonder if what sets the show apart isn't something else—no less unusual on television. And that is the fact it treats people like the Hills and their neighbors with respect. Not just affection, but respect. Which is more than Twig Boy or the Mega Lo Mart do. ■

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Hank Hill's Mega Lo Mart anxiety.

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# A Little Respect, Y'all

By Scott McLemee

**W**hen Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase "global village" some 30 years ago, it had a nicely paradoxical ring; the image it conjured in the mind's eye was intriguing and odd. Today, it is several degrees more commonplace than any cliché. The Canadian media theorist predicted that electronic telecommunications would permeate and fuse the world—in much the way the oral broadcasting systems of gossip and folklore held together communities in more low-tech societies. And this, it turns out, was a pretty good guess. (The entire planet knows what Bill told Monica after pizza; and even now, the mythology of *The X Files* may be shaping the agenda of some distant guerrilla movement we'll hear more about during the next century.) As the flow of images and information accelerates, the geographic and cultural distances between us shrink.

Before bursting into a chorus from "It's a Small World After All," however, I want to note something fairly obvious. Most human beings live not in some transcontinental datasphere, but amidst particular towns or neighborhoods. Like it or not, we've all picked up some of the customs and habits of thought fostered in that strange land called the media. But people have a really tenacious way of insisting on the distinctive value of their own (non-global) village.

Third World intellectuals, for example, have argued for the existence of "local knowledges" unavailable to the universalizing and imperialist discourses of the West. That used to puzzle me. Then one day I realized that, since leaving Texas for the East Coast, I had not tasted various regional delicacies from back home. Go anyplace on spaceship earth and the Chicken McNuggets will taste the same. But try ordering chicken-fried steak up north, and they look at you funny.

**W**hich brings us to *King of the Hill*, Mike Judge's half-hour animated TV series (Fox, Tuesday night), set in a little Texas town called Arlen. The "King" of its title is Hank Hill: a white guy in his early forties who earns a modest but comfortable income selling (as he likes to say) "propane and propane accessories." Anyone familiar with Judge's previous show, *Beavis and Butthead*, will recognize Hank as a descendent of Mr. Anderson, a frequent victim of the little bastards. But Hank Hill is a much more fully realized character. His wife, Peggy, is a substitute teacher for the Arlen School District; they have a son, Bobby.

Among Hank's closest friends is his neighbor Dale, who worries a lot about black helicopters and government conspiracies, though he is much too paranoid to join the militias (which, after all, are tools of the New World Order). Despite



Peggy Hill (right) finds her voice.

this all-encompassing suspicion, Dale somehow has never recognized the fact that his son bears a strong resemblance to the Native American massage therapist his wife has been seeing about her "headaches" for the past dozen years.

When *King of the Hill* debuted on Fox in 1997, it was a mid-season replacement show. Such programs have a tendency to die quickly. Taping it for posterity, I began to mourn *King of the Hill* almost from the start. It seemed too distinctive—too regionalistic—ever to survive. Any moron can imitate a Texas accent, and most feel obliged to try, but *King* was the product of someone with an ear for fine verbal detail. It caught the way a bunch of guys might stand around drinking beer—each saying, in turn, "Ahhh, yep"—thereby renewing the social contract. (And my wife, a Connecticut Yankee, was surprised to learn that "Boy howdy!" is not an idiom of my own invention). Could a wider audience appreciate such nuances? Not likely.

Three video cassettes later, *King of the Hill* is still on the air—the most successful animated series on broadcast television since *The Simpsons*, to which it is often compared. This is misleading. Both shows are set in imaginary small towns, but there the resemblance ends.

A legend has it that there is a Springfield in every state of the union. Not so, in fact. Yet *The Simpsons* is defined by its geographical non-specificity. And while Lisa Simpson is unhappy about living in such a backwater, her home town often seems remarkably urban and sophisticated. (As evidence, one might point to the *Springfield Review of Books*,

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